

# Red Leaves and Roses

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# RED LEAVES AND ROSES

## Poems

BY

MADISON CAWEIN

AUTHOR OF "LYRICS AND IDYLS," "DAYS AND DREAMS,"  
"MOODS AND MEMORIES," ETC.



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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# GENERAL

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MADISON CAWEIN

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MAIN

TO  
MY MOTHER

PROEM.

*OH, shall I sing of joy I only  
Remember as departed joy?  
Of life once glad that now is lonely?  
Of love a treasure, now a toy?  
Of grief, regret but makes the keener,  
Of longing disappointment mars?—  
These will I sing, and sit serenely  
Than song among the stars.*

*Or shall I sing of faith once spoken?  
Of vows heart-happy once with tears?  
Of promised faith and vows long broken .  
One hath remembered many years?  
Of truth, the false but leaves the truer,  
Of trust, the doubt makes doubly sure?—  
These will I sing, the noble doer  
Whose dauntless heart is pure.*

*I will not sing of time made hateful,  
Of hope that only clings to hate;  
Of charity now grown ungrateful,  
And pride that cannot stand and wait.—  
Of humbleness care hath imparted,  
Of resignation born of ills,  
These will I sing, and stand high-hearted  
As hope upon the hills.*

*Once on a throne of gold and scarlet  
I touched a chord and felt it break;  
I dreamed I was a king—a varlet  
A king's amusement left to wake.—  
Now on a star my longing lingers,  
While on a tomb I lean and read,  
And write with eager soul and fingers  
That life may give me heed.*



# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
Red Leaves and Roses . . . . .	1
Wild-Thorn and Lily . . . . .	7
The Idyl of the Standing-Stone . . . . .	38
Some Summer Days . . . . .	47
An Epic of South-Fork . . . . .	55
A Niello . . . . .	66
Wreckage . . . . .	70
Hieroglyphs . . . . .	78
Siren Sands . . . . .	87
At the Lane's End . . . . .	93
Deep in the Forest . . . . .	101
One Night . . . . .	115
The Elixir of Love . . . . .	119
The Spell . . . . .	123
The Return . . . . .	125
The Letter . . . . .	127
Wounded . . . . .	129
The Parting . . . . .	131
The Daughter of the Snow . . . . .	133
Hildegard . . . . .	136
Urganda . . . . .	139
The Son of Evrawc . . . . .	143
Torquemada . . . . .	157
An Episode . . . . .	163
The Mameluke . . . . .	166
The Slave . . . . .	168

---

	PAGE
The Seven Devils of Mahomet . . . . .	170
John Davis, Boucanier . . . . .	172
Thamus . . . . .	176
Adventurers . . . . .	179
Voyagers . . . . .	180
America . . . . .	182
The Ocklawaha . . . . .	184
The Minorcan . . . . .	187
The Spring in Florida . . . . .	189
Strategy . . . . .	191
The Whippoorwill . . . . .	193
Satan . . . . .	195
Sic Vos Non Vobis . . . . .	196
Once . . . . .	198
Resignation . . . . .	200
After Rain . . . . .	202
Peace . . . . .	205



## RED LEAVES AND ROSES.

### I.

AND he had lived such loveless years  
That suffering had made him wise ;  
And she had known no truer tears  
Than those of girlhood's eyes.

And he, perhaps, had loved before—  
One who had wed? one who had died?  
So life for him had been but poor  
In love for which he sighed.

In years and love she was so young  
Youth paused and beckoned at the gate,  
And bade her list love's birds that sung ;  
She said that love should wait.

One understood. One only knew  
The fields were faded, skies were gray,  
Nor saw the sad rose autumn blew  
There in her heedless way.

## II.

If he had come to her when May  
Danced down the wildwood,—every way  
Marked with white flowers, as if her gown  
    Had torn and fallen,—it might be  
She had not met him with a frown,  
    Nor used such love so bitterly.

Or if he had but come when June  
Set stars and roses to one tune,  
And breathed in honeysuckle throats  
    Clove-honey of her spicy mouth,  
His soul had found some sunny notes  
    In hers to cheer the cloudy South.

He came when Fall made mad the sky,  
And on the hills leapt like a cry  
Of battle ; when the leaves were dead ;  
    To find a dreamy blonde in white,  
Thrust in whose hair one rose, blood-red,  
    Glowed like the Summer's heart of light.

He might have known, since leaves were blown,  
And in the woods great weeds were grown ;  
Since nearing Winter wrecked the world,  
    How love like his would seem absurd  
To her whose sinless lip had curled,  
    Yet heard him to his latest word.

Still he was humble, and denied  
His tongue that instant's flush of pride,  
For he remembered how the gray  
    Held heaven and earth, alas ! and knew  
She wore the colors of the May,  
    And to the May her heart was true.

And so he left her : and the bud  
In her deep hair—one drop of blood  
Out of his life to weaken him :—  
    Again (the poison of his pain),  
Poppy, for her to crush and brim  
    A goblet with, that he must drain.

## III.

“ Such days as these,” one said, and bent  
    Among the marigolds, all dew,  
And dripping zinnia stems, “ are sent  
    Out of the days our childhood knew ;  
And it is these endearing those,  
    So dearer now they are grown old ;  
Days, once imperfect with the rose,  
    Sufficient with the marigold.”

“ Such days as these,” one said, and gazed  
    Long with unlifted eyes that held  
Sad autumn nights, “ our hopes have raised  
    In futures that are mist-enspelled.

And so it is the fog blows in  
Days dearer through the death they paint  
One hard surrendering of sin  
One long ability to saint."

## IV.

Gold deeds of hearts that have not kept  
Rare riches as a miser, when  
Pale lips have writhed and eyes have wept  
Among the toiling tribes of men,  
Each summer day gave man sweet alms  
Of silver in white lilies, while  
Each night, with healing, outstretched palms  
Stood Christlike with its starry smile.

Will she remember this when dull  
Months drag their sadder hours by,  
With feet that crush the beautiful  
And leave the beautiful to die?  
Or never see? nor sit with lost  
Dreams withered 'mid the empty husks,  
And wait, neglectful of the frost,  
In dead delusions of the dusks?

## V.

He is as one who, treading salty scurf  
Of lonely sea-sands, hears the roaring rocks

Of some lost isle of misty crags and lochs ;  
Who sees no sea, but, through a world of surf,  
Gray ghosts of gulls and screaming petrel flocks :

When from the deep's white ruin and wild wreck,  
Above the fog, beneath the ghostly gull,  
The iron ribs of some storm-shattered hull  
Looms, packed with pirate treasure to the deck  
A century rotten : feels his wealth replete,  
When long-baulked ocean claims it ; and one dull  
Wave flings derisive at despondent feet  
A skull, one doubloon rattling in the skull.

## VI.

And when full Autumn sets the dahlia stems  
On fire with flowers, and the chill dew turns  
The maple trees, above geranium urns,  
To Emir tents, and strings with flawless gems  
The moon-flower and the wahoo-bush that burns ;  
Calmly she sees the year grow sad and strange,  
And stands with one among the wilted walks  
Of the gray garden of the stern stone grange,  
And feels no sorrow for the frost-maimed stalks  
Since—though the wailing Autumn by her walks—  
Youth marks swift Spring on life's far mountain-  
range.

Or she will lean to her old harpsichord ;  
A youthful face beside her ; and the glow

Of hickory on the hearth will baulk the blow  
Of blustering rain that beats the casement hard ;  
And sing of Summer and so thwart the snow.

“ Haply, some day, she yet may sit alone,”  
He thinks, “ within the shadow-saddened house,  
When on the gables stormy echoes moan,  
And in the closet gnaws the lonesome mouse ;  
And Memory come stealing down the stair  
From dusty attics where is piled the Past—  
Like so much rubbish that we hate to keep—  
And turn the knob ; and, framed in frosty hair,  
A grave forgotten face look in at last,  
And she will know, and bow her head and weep.”



## WILD-THORN AND LILY.

## I.

THAT night, returning to the farm, we rode  
Before a storm. Uprolling from the west,  
Incessant with distending fire, loomed  
The multitudes of tempest ; towering, here  
A shadowy Shasta, there a cloudy Hood,  
Veined agonies of gold aurora-born  
Sierras of the storm. Vibrating on,  
Low rumblings of the thunder far away ;  
The opening welkin shone one livid sheet,  
And all the firmament hung hewn with fire ;  
Then leapt the thunder ; and it seemed that hosts  
Of Heaven rushed to war with blazing shields  
And swords of splendor. Through the driven trees  
The large drops fell around us as we rode  
Along the locust avenue. And she—  
Was it the lightning that made weariness  
Of her dim countenance ? or memory  
With the regret, that, now the thing was done,  
A yearning fell upon her to be free,  
Because she loved him better than she knew,  
And must look backward on a barrier  
That intervening months had built between  
The possible and impossible ? God knows ! . . .

Yet, I had won her honestly with words  
Love only uttered out of its soul's truth,  
Her, when engaged to Julien. What else  
Had led us to elopement? Well; 't was done,  
The whole, mad, lovely, miserable affair.  
Who would avoid the consequence? Not I!  
"Since she is only woman, I am man,  
Strong with the fixed determination to  
Bear all the blame and burthen willingly."

Scarce had we entered when high Heaven oped  
Vast gates of gold and doors of booming brass  
That dammed a deluge, and the deluge poured.—  
I thought of him then; for I felt that she  
Was thinking hard of Julien and his moods;  
My school friend Julien, whom she once had won  
To so believe she loved, and— Well! my play  
Was open as the morning, and as fair.  
His poverty and genius here, and here  
My wealth and platitude; and I had won.  
But it was hard for him. I did not dream  
That it would end so. And when Gwendolyn  
Used every tenderness—and that is much—  
I did not dream his easy temperament  
Were so effected of a wrong or right;  
His character, intensely sensitive,  
Would fall into extremes of morbidness,  
And egoism. Far different my own,  
Whose vigorous iron should not bend, but break

At one decisive blow : his should have sprung  
Elastic as fine-tempered steel that bends  
And so resumes its usual usefulness . . .  
A wan smile strained the corners of her mouth  
When from the porch into the parlor's blaze  
I led her. And her mother met us there,  
Her mother and her father. And I saw  
The slow reflection of their happiness  
Gain in her eyes, as their approval grew  
From half-severe rebukes that were well meant.  
She had done well, and we were soon forgiven.

But I resumed his letter when alone ;  
His letter written her three months before.  
She had not read, and never should behold.  
I would not let the dead scrawl mar and soil  
My late-won joy, my testament of love.  
No ! I should read it, and I would destroy.  
Thoughts made of music for a last farewell,  
When he knew all and asked her to perpend  
Expressions of past things her gift of love  
Had given speech to in the happy days.  
And so I read :—

## II.

“ The rhyme is mine, but yours  
The thought and all the music, springing from  
The rareness of the love that dawned on me  
A little while to make my sad life glad.

Should I regret the sunset it refused,  
Since all my morn was richer than the world?  
Or that my day should stride without a change  
Of crimson, or of purple, or of gold,  
Into the barren blackness where the moon  
And all God's stars lay dead? Should I complain,  
Upbraid or censure or one moment curse,  
I with my morning? 'T is a memory  
That stains the midnight now: one wild-rose ray  
Laid like a finger pointing me the path  
I follow, and I go rejoicingly.

Our love was very young (nor had it aged—  
If we had lived long lifetimes—once in me),  
When one day, strolling in the sun, you spoke  
Words I perceived should hint a coming change:  
I made three stanzas of the thought, you see;  
But now 't is like the sea-shell that suggests,  
And will associate us with the sea  
In its vague song and elfland workmanship.  
Yet it has lost a something that it had  
There by the far sand's foaming; something rare,  
A different beauty like an element:

I wonder on what life will do  
When love is loser of all love;  
When life still longs to love anew  
And has not love enough:—  
I'll turn my heart into a ray,  
And wait a day.

I wonder on what love will hold  
When life is weary of all life ;  
And life and love have both grown old  
With scars of sin and strife :—  
I 'll change my soul into a flower,  
And wait an hour.

I wonder on why men forget  
The life that love made laugh ; and why  
Weak women will remember yet  
The life that love made sigh :—  
I 'll sing my thought into a song,  
And wait——how long ?

## III.

“ And once you questioned of our mocking-bird,  
And of the German nightingale, and I,  
Knowing a sweeter bird than those sweet two,  
Made fast associates of birds and brooks  
And learned their numbers. Middle April made  
The path of lilac leading to your porch  
A rift of fallen Paradise ; a blue  
So full of fragrance that the birds that built  
Among the lilacs thought that God was there,  
And of God's goodness they would sing and sing,  
Till each new note led to diviner song.  
And waiting by the gate, that reached the lane,  
For you who gave sweet eloquence to all,  
The sunset and the lilacs and the spring,  
My heart was singing and it sang of you :

Two glowworms are the jewels in  
Her ears, and underneath her chin  
A diamond like a firefly :  
There is no starlight in the sky  
When Gwendolyn stands in the maze  
Of woodbine of the portico,  
For all the stars are in her gaze,  
The night and stars I know.

A clinging dream of haze the lawn  
She wears ; and like a bit of dawn  
Her fan with one red jewel pinned :  
Among the boughs there breathes no wind  
When Gwendolyn comes down the path  
Of lilac from the portico,  
For all the breeze her coming hath,  
The beam and breeze I know.

Two locust-blooms her hands, and slips  
Of eglantine her cheeks and lips,  
Her hair a hyacinth of gloom :  
The balmy buds give no perfume  
When Gwendolyn draws near to me,  
The gate beyond the portico,  
For all sweet essences is she,  
The fragrance that I know.

Life, love, and faith are in her face,  
And in her presence sleep's soft grace ;  
Her speech is my religion,—word  
Of God I hear ;—no mocking-bird,

When Gwendolyn is by, may float  
One bubble from the portico,  
For all the birds nest in her throat,  
The song-birds that I know.

## IV.

“ The mocking-bird ! And then weird fancy filled  
My soul with vision, and I saw a song  
Pursue a bird that was no bird—a voice  
Concealed in dim expressions of the Spring,—  
Who sits among the forests and the hills,  
With dark-blue eyes that muse upon the flowers,—  
Where we strolled anxious as the April hills :

The sunbeam, all the day that fell  
Upon the fountain,  
Like laughter gurgling in the dell  
Below the mountain,  
Drank, with its sparkle, one by one  
The water words that seemed to run  
A melody,—the sunrays tell,—  
That never yet was done.

The moonray, on the rocks that lay  
Where silence dallies,  
Where Echo haunts the wilder way  
Among the valleys,  
The livelong night upon the rocks  
Hung, hid among girl Echo's locks,

To steal her voice,—the moonbeams say,—  
That mocks and only mocks.

The shadow, lain where shadows meet  
Beneath the roses  
And thorns—the bitter and the sweet  
That life discloses,—  
Hugged with the rose-balm and the dew  
The crimson thorns that pierced it through ;  
The mad unrest,—the shades repeat,—  
That now is false, now true.

A fairy found the beam of gold,  
And ray of glitter ;  
The shadow whose dark bosom's fold  
Held sweet and bitter ;  
And made a bird beneath the thorn,  
Dark gray to haunt the night and morn,  
A voice of laughter,—it is told,—  
Love, mockery, and scorn.

## v.

“Among the white haw-blossoms, where the creek  
Droned under drifts of dogwood and of haw,  
The red-bird, like a crimson blossom blown  
Against the snow-white bosom of the Spring,  
The chaste confusion of her lawny breast,  
Sang on, prophetic of serener days,  
As confident as June's completer hours.



And I stood listening like a hind, who hears  
A wood-nymph breathing in a forest flute  
Among gray beeches of myth-haunted ways :  
And when it ceased, the memory of the air  
Blew like a syrinx in my brain : I made  
A lyric of the notes that men might know :

Fly out with flirt and fluting—  
As flies a falling star  
From flaming star-beds shooting,—  
From where the roses are.

Wing past, and sing me seven  
Songs of faint fragrances  
White sylphs have breathed in heaven,  
Or what such sweetness is.

Sing on ! each burning feather  
Thrill, throbbing at thy throat ;  
A song of glowworm weather,  
And of a firefly boat :

Of red morns and a princess  
Who, changed to a perfume,  
Hid where yon lily winces,  
Or where yon roses bloom.

No bird calls half so airy,  
No bird of dusk or dawn,  
O masking King of Fairy,  
O red-crowned Oberon !

## VI.

“ Alas ! the nightingale I never heard.  
Yet I, remembering how your voice would thrill  
Me with exalted expectation, felt  
The placid-throated nightingale would win  
Into my soul in some soft way like this :  
Presentiments of nights that match the flowers  
With the prompt stars and wed them with a song.  
Of such, love whispered me when deep in dreams,  
I made my nightingale. It is a voice  
Heard in the April of our year of love :

Between the stars and roses  
There lies a summer-haunted lea,  
Where every breeze that blows is  
Another melody ;  
Where every bud that pineth,  
Except the rose, divineth  
Each star is but a bee,  
Or golden moth that shineth.

The star and rose are wiser  
Than all but love beneath the skies,  
For they are what the skies are  
And love hath made them wise :  
No bee may hum and rifle,  
No moon-moth come and stifle,  
The love that never dies,  
The love that will not trifle.

There is a bird that carries  
Song messages ; and comes and goes  
'Tween every star that tarries  
And every rose that blows :  
A bird that will not tire,  
Whose throat 's a throbbing lyre  
To sing each star a rose,  
And every rose a fire.

## VII.

“ O Maytime woods ! O Maytime lanes and hours !  
How should she know ? But often of a night  
Beside the path where woodbine odors blew  
Between the drowsy eyelids of the dusk,—  
When, like a swarm of pearly moths, the moon  
Hung silvering long windows of her room,—  
I stood among the shrubs. The dark house slept.  
I looked and listened, for—I know not what . . .  
Some tremor of her gown : a velvet leaf's  
Unfolding to caresses of the spring ;  
A rustle of her footstep ; like the dew  
That rolls avowal from a tulip's lips  
That burn with scarlet ; or the whispered word  
Of something lovelier than new leaf or dew—  
The word young lips half murmur in a dream :

Serene with sleep light visions load her eyes,  
And underneath her window blooms a quince.  
The night is a sultana who doth rise

In slippered caution to admit a prince,  
Who her black eunuchs and her lord defies.

I dream that dreams besiege her, while the breeze  
Pelts me with petals of the quince and lifts  
The Balm-of-Gilead buds, and seems to squeeze  
Aroma on aroma through sweet rifts  
Of Eden, dripping through the rainy trees.

Along the path the buckeye trees begin  
To heap their hills of blossoms. Oh, that they  
Grew Romeo ladders where her windows win  
The moonlight and the odor—that must pray  
About her soul—so I might enter in!

A dream, to see the balsam scent erase  
Its dim intrusion; and the starry night  
Conclude majestic pomp; the virgin grace  
Of every bud abashed before the white,  
Pure passion-flower of her innocent face!

#### VIII.

“And once, in early May, a brush-bird sang  
Among the garden bushes; and you asked  
If the suave song stayed knocking at my heart.  
I smiled some answer, and, behold, that night  
Found that my heart had locked this fancy in:

Rain, rain and a ribbon of song  
Uncurled where the blossoms are sprinkled;

The brush-sparrow sings, and I long  
For the silver-sweet throat, that has tinkled,  
To sing in the bloom and the rain,  
Sing again, and again, and again,  
Under my window pane.

Rain, rain and the trickling tips  
Of the million pink blooms of the quinces ;  
And I hear the song rill from her lips,  
The lute-haunted lips of my princess :  
O girl in the rain and the bloom,  
Sing again in the pelting perfume,  
Sweetheart, under my room !

Rain, rain and the dripping of drops  
From the cups of the blossoms they load, or  
Leave laughing, on tipsiest tops ;  
And eyes of the sunbeam and odor :  
There, under the bloom-blowing tree,  
A face like a flower to see,  
Love is looking at me.

## IX.

“ Once in the village I had heard a song,  
A melody that I would bring and sing  
If such amused you. But, among your hills,  
Majestic sunsets and the serious stars  
Made discord of its words, that seemed as stale  
As musty parlors where the village moped.

Look, lovely eyes, and let me know  
The timid flower, her love hath cherished,  
Fades not before the fruit shall show,  
Seen in the pure truth of your glow  
Whence all distrust hath perished.

Lift, winsome lips, and let me take  
The sacred whisper of her spirit  
To mine in kisses, that shall make  
Mute marriage of our souls, and wake  
High faith that shall inherit.

## X.

“ And so I wrote another filled with birds,  
Deliberate twilight and eve’s punctual star ;  
And made the music of that song obey  
The metre of my own and melody :

Only to hear that you love me,  
Only to feel it is true ;  
Stars and the gloaming above me,  
I in the gloaming with you.  
Staining through violet fire  
A twilight of poppy and gold,  
Red as a heart with desire,  
Rich with a secret untold.

Deep where the shadow is doubled,  
Deep where the blossoms are long,

Listen !—deep love in the bubbled  
Breath of a mocking-bird's song.  
Dearest, to know you are dearer,  
Drawing the skies from afar ! . . .  
Stars and the heavens the nearer  
By but one maiden—my star.

## XI.

“ Confronted with the certainty that I  
Had no approval but my prompting hope's,  
Who had not dreaded disappointment there !  
The shadow of a heart's unformed denial,  
That should take form and soon confirm the  
doubt !

The doubt that would content itself with this :

If I might hold her by the hand,—  
Her hands so like the hands of Peace,—  
Her heart would hear and understand  
My heart's demand,  
And all her idling cease.

If she would let my eyes look in  
Her eyes with all the look of Truth,  
Her soul might see how mine would win  
Her, without sin,  
In all her lovely youth.

If I might kiss her mouth, and lead  
The kiss up to her eyes and hair,

There is no prayer that so could plead,—  
And find sure heed,—  
My love's divine despair.

## XII.

“ And uninstructed smiled and wrote ‘ despair.’  
Severe, yet eager of the shade that should  
Some day come stealing through my silent door  
To sit unbidden through the lonely hours.—  
But now 't was summer, and all living things,  
The lowly flowers and the common bees,  
Became divine interpreters for me :

Say that he cannot tell her how he loves her,—  
Words of much adoration often fail,—  
When but a lock that loosens, glove that gloves her,  
Clothe her coy femininity in mail.

So many humble wisdoms to express what  
The language of devotion is denied ;  
Ambassadors to make the woman guess what  
Her heart's surrendered fortress hath defied.

A bird to bruit his bashfulness—perpend him !  
A bee to lisp the secret that is she ;  
His pure appeal the blossom to defend him . . .  
Resistless pleaders, bird and bloom and bee.



## XIII.

“ So was my love acknowledged. For I thought  
You loved me as love led me to believe :  
And then, no matter where I walked or went  
Among the hills, the woods, or quiet fields,  
All had a poetry so intimate,  
So happy and so ready that for me  
'T was but to stoop and gather as I went,  
As one goes reaching roses in the June.  
Three withered wild ones that I gathered then  
I send you now. Their scent and bloom are dust :

## I.

What wild flower shows perfection  
As perfect as thy features are,  
I leave to the election  
Of each deciding star :  
Wild morning-glory or (who knows ?)  
Wild phlox, wild snowdrop or wild rose ?

What cascade hath suspicion  
Of sparkle such as eyes like these,  
I leave to the decision  
Of each proclaiming breeze :  
The wind that kisses buds awake,  
And rolls the ripple on the lake.

What bird shall sing the naming  
Of all the music that thou art,

I leave to the proclaiming  
Of my electing heart :  
My heart, whose love is as thy soul  
An infinite, adoring whole.

## 2.

What witch then hast thou met,  
Who wrought this amulet ?  
The charm that makes each look, love,  
A bud that blows ;  
Thy face an open book, love,  
Whose language is the rose,  
Than wisdom wiser yet.

What fairy of the wood,  
To whom thou once wast good,  
Gave thee this gift ?— Thy words, love,  
Should be pure gold ;  
Thy voice as singing birds, love,  
Out of the Mays of old,  
Whom love hath still pursued.

What goblin of the glade  
This white enchantment made,  
That haunts thy maiden presence  
As might the moon ;  
Thy throat's, thy hand's white essence  
Of starlight soft with June  
Upon a cool cascade ?

What wizard of the cave  
Hath made my soul thy slave ?  
To dream of thee when sleeping,  
And when awake  
My anxious spirit keeping  
'Neath spells that will not break,  
Until thy love shall save !

## 3.

Dear, (though given conclusion to),  
Songs, no memory surrenders,  
Still their music breathe in you ;  
Silence meditation renders  
Audible with notes it knew.

Heart, when all the flowers are dead,  
Perfumes, that the soul remembers  
Were included in their red,—  
Making June of long December,—  
From your hand and face are shed.

Dear, when night denies a star,  
Darkness will not suffer, seeing  
Song and fragrance are not far ;  
Starlight of the summer being  
In the loveliness you are.

## XIV.

“Revealing distant vistas where, I thought,  
I saw your love stand as 'mid lily blooms,  
Long angel goblets molded out of stars,  
Pouring aroma at your feet : and life  
Took fire with thoughts your soul must help you  
read :

A song ; and songs (who doth not know ?)  
Reveal no music but is thine.  
Thou singest, and the waters flow,  
The breezes blow, the sunbeams shine,  
And all the sad earth is divine.

Low laughter ; and I look away ;  
The day may drowse, the night may dream,  
I walk beneath sweet skies of May  
On ways where play the bud and beam,  
And hear a bird and forest stream.

A thought—and then it seems to me  
Lost lifetimes 'mid the stars arise,  
Rain memories of the Heaven on thee ;  
And it may be from Paradise  
Hast felt an angel lover's eyes.

## XV.

“ But is it well to tell you what I thought  
When I beheld no change beyond the moods

That gloomed and glistened in your raven eyes ?  
When I sat singing 'neath one steadfast star  
Of morning with no phantoms of strange fears  
To slay the look or word that helped me sing :  
When song came easier than come buds in spring,  
That make the barren boughs one pomp of pearls ;

Oh, let the graceless day go past,  
And let the night be full of song.  
When life and life are one at last,  
And love no more shall long,  
'T is sweet midsummer of the dream,  
And all the dreams thou hast  
Are nearer than they seem.

Once thou didst dream in autumn of  
Death with cadaverous eyes that gazed  
Deep in a shadow. . . It was love  
Whose beaming eyes were raised  
From the crowned sorrow that unrolled  
Strange splendor ; and amazed,  
Love didst thou then behold.

And we should know now, it is said,  
The dead are nearer than we know.  
And when they tell thee I am dead  
Thine eyes shall see it so ;  
But I shall feel in every beat,  
And soul-song of thy woe  
My love live more complete.

## XVI.

“ One evening I would have you talk with me.  
Impatience hurt me in your short replies.  
And I who had refused,—because we dread  
Approaching horror of our lives made maimed,—  
The inevitable, could not help but see  
Some secret change was here.—That night I  
dreamed

I wandered 'mid old ruins, where the snake  
And scorpion crawled in poison-spotted heat ;  
Plague-bloated bulks of hideous vine and root  
Wrapped fallen fanes ; and bristling cacti bloomed  
Blood-red and death-white on forgotten tombs.  
And from my soul went forth a bitter cry  
To pierce the silence that was packed with death  
And pale presentiment. And so I went,  
A white flame beckoning before my face,  
And in mine ears sounds of primordial seas  
That boasted preadamic gods and men :  
A flame before and far beyond a voice :  
But, lo, the white flame when I reached for it  
Became thin ashes like a dead man's dust ;  
And when I thought I should behold the sea,  
Stagnation, turned to filth and rottenness,  
Rolled out a swamp ; the voice became a stench.

If we should pray together now  
For sunshine and for rain,  
And thou shouldst get fair weather now,

And I the clouds again,  
Would rain and ray keep single,  
Or for the rainbow mingle?

Dear, if this should be made to me,  
That I had asked for light,  
And God had given shade to me,  
And thou shouldst know no night,  
Would all thy daylight tarry?  
Or night and morning marry?

If God should give me winter, love,  
And give thy life the spring,  
And icicles should splinter, love,  
While all the wild birds sing,  
Would thine walk by and glitter,  
Forgetful mine is bitter?

## XVII.

“So on the anguish of a dying hope  
A baby hope was nourished ; all in vain.  
For at the last, although we parted friends,  
The friendship lay like sickness on my soul,  
That saw all gladness perish from the world,  
And love build up a sepulchre for hope.

And could you learn forgetfulness,  
And teach my heart how to forget ;  
And I unlearn all fretfulness,

And teach your soul that still will fret ;  
The mornings of the world would burn  
Before us and we should not turn,  
For we should not regret.

Could you but know why sorrow treads  
Upon the heels of joy alway ;  
And I how each to-morrow treads  
With shadowy steps upon to-day ;  
No change or time would then surprise  
Our lives with what our lives were wise,  
But one should see and say.

If you could stand exterior with  
Your dreams that still exalt desire ;  
And I could live superior with  
The soul that makes my thoughts aspire ;  
Long stairways would the stars unroll  
To lift our love up, soul by soul,  
To some celestial fire.

## XVIII.

“ There fell no words of comfort from your lips.  
Not that I asked for pity ; that had been  
As fire to the scalded or dry bread  
Unto the famished fallen 'mid the sands !  
But all your actions said that I was wrong,  
And how, I know not and have ceased to care ;  
Still standing like one stricken blind at noon,



Who gropes and fumbles feeling all grow strange  
That once was so familiar ; cursing God  
Who locks him in with darkness and despair.—  
Your judgment had been juster had it had  
A lesser love than mine to judge.—O love,  
Where lay the justice of thy judge in this?—

‘ If thou hadst praised thy God as long  
As thou hast praised my hands and eyes,  
Think of the sweetness of the song  
That now has only sighs !  
Think of the trust that had been strong !  
The hope that had been wise !

‘ If thou hadst bade my heart be more  
Than life, because thy life was sad,  
Thou hadst had all till I were poor  
To make thy sorrow glad.  
Thou cam’st a beggar to my door,  
And had more than I had.

‘ If thou hadst showed me how to love,  
Nor played with love as children play,  
The dove had still remained the dove,  
And never flown away.  
My love is, and shall be, above  
The love that lasts a day !’

## XIX.

“ And haply it was this : One soul, that still  
Demanded more than it could well return ;  
And, searching inward, yet could never pierce  
Beyond its superficiality.  
You did not know ; but I had felt in me  
The rich fulfilment of a rare accord,  
And could not, though the longing lay like song  
And music on me, win your soul’s response :

Were it well, lifting me  
Eyes that give heed,  
Down in your soul to see  
Thought, the affinity  
Of act and deed ?  
Knowing what naught may tell  
Of heart and soul ?  
Yet, were the knowledge whole,  
And were it well ?

Were it well, giving true  
Love all enough,  
Still to discover new  
Depths of true love for you,  
Infinite love ?  
Feeling what naught may tell  
Of heart and soul ?  
Yet, were the knowledge whole,  
And were it well ?

## XX.

“ What else but, laboring for some good, to lift  
Ourselves above the despotism of self,  
All egoism strangling strength and hope !  
Art, our intensest and our truest love,  
Immaculateness that has never sped  
Beyond her lover with his love all soul.  
I followed beauty, and my ardor prayed  
Your features would be blotted from my brain,  
Nor mar the gratitude I owed to God.  
I prayed ; and see !—the influence of your eyes !—

I have no song to tell thee  
The love that I would sing ;  
The song that should enspell thee,  
The words that should so quell thee  
That all thy life would cling  
Around my heart to-morrow—  
For all my songs are sorrow.

My strength is not a giant  
To hold thee with strong hands,  
To make thee less defiant,  
Thy spirit more compliant  
With all my love demands :  
Alas ! my love is meekness,  
And all my strength is weakness.

What hope have I to hover  
When wings refuse to rise—

To wing to thee, my lover,  
Where all the nights discover  
    No darkness like thine eyes ;  
When life and hope lie dreaming  
On thee who art but seeming !

## XXI.

“ I prayed ; and for a time felt strong as strength,  
And held both hands out to the loveliness  
That lured in the ideal. And I felt  
Compelling power upon me that would lift  
My face to heaven to behold the sun,  
And bend it back to earth to see the flowers.  
I learned long lessons 'twixt a look and look :

Breezes and linden blooms,  
    Sunshine and showers ;  
Rain, that the May perfumes,  
    Cupped in the flowers :  
Clouds and the leaves that patter  
    Beryls of greenest glare ;  
Wet rifts of skies that scatter  
Sapphires the Sylphides shake,  
When their loose fillets break,  
    Out of their radiant hair.

Oh, for some song and lute !  
    Wings that should pinion  
Song for Love's swift pursuit

In Youth's dominion !  
Searching in all serenest  
Hours and buds and eyes,  
Saying, ' O thou who queenest  
Hearts, from thy lovely land  
Reach me no hidden hand  
Over the worldly wise ! '

## XXII.

" Thus would I scatter grain around my life  
To lure cloud-colored doves into my soul,  
And find them turn black ravens while they flew.  
The old, dull, helpless aching at the heart,  
As if some scar had turned a wound again.  
While idle grief stared at the brutal past,  
Which held a loss that made the past more rich  
Than Earth's rich arts : that marvelled how it came  
Such puny folly should usurp love's high  
Proud pedestal of life that held your form  
In sculptured Parian lying strewn in shards.  
And oft I shook myself,—for nightmares weighed  
Each sense,—and seemed to wake ; yet evermore  
Beheld a death's-head grinning at my lips.

So when the opening of the door doth thrill  
My soul with sudden knowledge he is come,  
I shall remember and forget them still,  
The rough ways of the coarser world, until  
His lips bend to me and my lips are dumb.

Then I shall not remember : but shall leave  
All recollection to the worldly race  
My fact hath so accomplished. Let them grieve  
The pale bereavements that do not bereave,  
And in new epochs take my higher place. . . .

Who knocks?—The night scouts every hill and  
heath ;  
And round my door are minions of the night ;  
And like a falchion, riven from its sheath,  
The wind swings, and the tempest grinds black  
teeth  
Around me and my wild, hand-hollowed light.

Who knocks? the door is open !—And I see  
The midnight groping with distorted fists  
To throttle courage hurled upon her knee ;  
Hold high my candle, for it so may be  
Love is bewildered in the rainy mists.—

No wandering wisp, to haunt the gusty rain  
With brimstone flicker, fading as it flies !—  
The door is open ; will he knock again ?  
The door is open ; shall it be in vain ?  
And ceremony still delay the wise ?

Who knocks in darkness waits till tempests pass.  
The door is closed : but morning lights shall thrust

It open : and the sun shall shine and mass

White splendor where once stained a colored glass,  
And toil and time—motes in a little dust.”

. . . . .

XXIII.

And I had read, read to the bitter close ;  
Half hearing lone surmises of the rain  
And trouble of the wind. At last I rose  
And went to Gwendolyn. She did not know  
The kiss I gave her had a shudder in it ;  
Nor how the form of Julien rose between  
Me and her lips, a bullet in his heart.

## THE IDYL OF THE STANDING-STONE.

## I.

SHE knows its windings and its crooks,  
The wild flowers of its lovely woods,  
The trumpet-vine's Red-Riding-Hoods,  
The lily's story books ;  
The iris, whose blue bonnets let  
Mab faces laugh from many a net  
Along the fairy brooks.

He knows its shallows and its pools,  
The rugged stairs of rock that go  
Climbing through water-fall and flow,  
Where haunt the minnow schools ;  
The grass and sedge where haunts the snipe,  
The bob-white where the berry 's ripe,  
And whom the echo fools.

She seeks the bleeding-heart and phlox,  
The touch-me-not whose bushes fill  
The old stones of the ruined mill ;  
She wades among the rocks ;  
Her feet are rose-pearl in the stream ;  
Her eyes are blossom-blue ; a beam  
Gleams on her light-brown locks.



He comes with fishing bait and line  
To angle in the darker deeps,  
Where all the sounding forest sleeps  
Of sycamore and pine ;  
And now and then a shadow swoops  
Around him of a hawk or groups  
Of pearl-gray clouds that shine.

And will he see, if they should meet,  
How she is fairer than each flower  
Her apron fills ? and in that hour  
Feel life is incomplete ?  
He stops below ; she walks above—  
The brook one blossom, white as love,  
Floats fragrant to his feet.

And she—should she behold the tan  
Of manly face and honest eyes,  
Would her heart know nobilities  
To make him more than man ?  
She drops one blossom—has she heard  
Soft whistling of a man—or bird,  
Whose dreamy quavers ran ?

They knew ; but then—they did not meet ;  
Yet some divulging influence  
Had touched them with the starry lens  
God holds to make hearts beat ;



That made her heart one haunting wish,  
And his—forgetful of the fish,  
One flower at his feet. . . .

## II.

The sassafras twigs had just lit up  
The yellow stars of their fragrant candles,  
And the dog-wood brimmed each brown-stained cup  
With April the brown bough dandles ;  
When down the orchard, whose apple blooms—  
Say, Ho, the hum o' the humble bee !—  
Were woven of morn on the elfland looms,  
A sense of Spring in the sprinkled glooms,  
A glimpse of the Spring—'t was she.

The maple as red as the delicate flush  
Of an afterglow where the west was crimson ;  
And the red-haw tree in the wing-whipped hush  
With its milk-white blossoms and greening limbs  
on ;  
And up in the wood where the oak-tree strung,—  
Say, Heigh, the rap o' the sapsucker !—  
Gray buds in bunches, as if they hung  
The fairies' belfries with bells that swung,—  
Was he with a heart for her.

Ay ! white the bloom of the rattle-weed,  
And white the bloom of the plum and cherry :  
And red as a stain the red-bud's brede,

And a flower the color of sherry ;  
And he saw her in the orchard drift,—  
And, ho ! the dew from the web that slips !—  
And she saw him in the woodland rift ;  
And he had given his life to lift  
Her pure face to his lips.

And the plantain there as odorous as  
The heliotrope in his mother's garden ;—  
When the beam from the hollow did seem to pass,  
And the ray on the hills to harden ;  
For she had smiled, and the sun fell flat,—  
And, heigh, the wasp i' the pawpaw bell !—  
And she had beckoned—and more in that  
To him than Spring on her hills who sat,  
Or the wide white world could tell.

### III.

The teasel and the horsemint spread  
The hillsides with pink sunset thrown  
On earth around The Standing-Stone  
That ripples in its rocky bed :  
There are no treasures that hold  
Gold richer than the daisies' gold  
That crowd its mouth and head.

Deep harvest, and a mower stands  
Among the morning wheat and whets

His scythe, and for a space forgets  
The labor of the ripened lands ;  
Then bends, and through the dewy grain  
His cradle hisses, and again  
He swings it in his hands.

And she beholds him where he mows  
On acres whence the water sends  
Faint music of reflecting bends  
And falls that interblend with flows ;  
She stands among the old bee-gums,  
Where all the apiary hums,  
A simple bramble-rose.

She hears him whistling as he leans  
To circling sweeps the rabbits fly,  
And sighs and smiles and knows not why,  
Nor what her heart's sweet secret means :  
He rests upon his scythe and sees  
Her smiling 'mid the hives of bees  
Beneath the flowering-beans.

The peacock-purple lizard creeps  
Along the fence-rail ; and the drone  
Of insects makes the country lone  
With dreaming where the water sleeps :  
She hears him singing as he swings  
His scythe ; he thinks of other things  
Than toil and, singing, reaps.

## IV.

## SONG.

*Into the woods they went again  
Over the fields of oats ;  
A reaper he and the binders twain,  
Out of the acres of golden grain  
In where the lily throats  
Were brimmed with the summer rain.*

*Hung on a bough a reaper's hook,  
Over the fields of oats ;  
And a maiden here with a merry look,  
And a laugh that rippled out of the brook,  
Out of the wild birds' throats,  
For the kiss that the reaper took.*

*Out of the woods the reaper went  
Over the fields of wheat,  
And a binder by with a face that blent  
All of life that is innocent,  
All of love that is sweet,  
Writ in her soul's young testament.*

*Who the maiden to keep the tryst,  
Over the fields of wheat?  
She, his folly had only kissed?  
She, he had given, to kiss whose wrist,  
His whole strong life made sweet?  
She who had seen and wist?*

## v.

Her only pearls are beads of hail,  
Her only diamonds are the dews ;  
Such jewels never can grow stale,  
Nor any value lose.

Among the millet beards she stands ;  
The languid wind lolls everywhere ;  
There are wild roses in her hands,  
One wild rose in her hair.

To-morrow where the shade is warm  
Among the June-ripe wheat she 'll stop,  
And from one daisy-loaded arm  
One yellow daisy drop.

She meets his brown eyes, glad and grave,  
With blue eyes where the dreams are sweet ;  
He is her lover and her slave,  
And mows among the wheat.

When buds broke on the apple trees  
She wore an apple-blossom dress,  
And walked with him on clover leas,  
And made him guess and guess.

When goose-plums ripened in the rain  
Plum-colored was her gown of red ;

They strolled along the creek-road lane—  
He had her heart she said.

When apples thumped the droughty land  
A russet color was her gown.  
A hunter came, and wooed her hand,  
A stranger from the town.

When grapes hung purple in the hot,  
They missed her dark-blue hood and dress ;  
And one tanned vintager forgot  
The purple of the press.

When snow made grave-stones of each sheaf  
Her gown was whiter than the snow,  
Her rubies redder than the leaf  
The autumn forests know.

What wounds her splendid shame conceals—  
Men will but kiss her if she sigh  
And never ask. And she ?—she feels  
How all her life 's a lie. . . .

VI.

In spring the hairy-vetchling strewed  
Blue morning blots on moss and leaf,—  
The little Esau of the wood  
Whose soul sat smiling in its grief :—

In spring he looked along the earth—  
No month, he thought, holds so much grace,  
No month of spring, such grace and mirth,  
As the true April of her face.

In fall the frail gerardia  
Hung signs of sunset and of dawn  
On root and rock, as if to draw  
Eyes ere the careless feet pass on.—  
And will you blame her in pursuit  
Of butterflies, who does not dream  
A flower loosened by her foot  
Drifts helpless with her down the stream?



## SOME SUMMER DAYS.

## I.

IF you should find her standing there  
Among the tiger-lily blooms,  
That lose rich jewels everywhere  
Among the woodland gleams and glooms,  
You would confess her over-fair,  
A cousin of the wood's perfumes.

The afternoon is dead with heat ;  
And all the drowsy shadow sleeps  
Like toil arm-pillowed in the wheat  
Beside the scythe with which he reaps :  
A blazing knight whose arms defeat  
The shades, the day rides down the deeps.

There is no sound more distant than  
The bell that haunts the hazy hill ;  
No nearer than the locust's span  
Of sound that makes the silence shrill ;  
And now there comes a sun-brown man  
Through tiger-lilies of the rill.

And they will go ; and in the end  
The west will glow, the east will pale,  
And then the glow and pallor blend

Like moonlight on a shifting sail ;  
And in the woods he 'll speak and bend  
His tan-dark face that laughs a tale.

The dusk will flash and fade away  
Through heavy orange, rose, and red,  
And leave the heavens violet gray  
Above a gipsy-lily bed ;  
And they will go, and he will say  
No words to her but love hath said.

Ten million stars the night will win  
Above them, and one firefly  
Pulse like a tangled starbeam in  
The cedar dark against the sky ;  
And he will lift her bashful chin  
And speak, and she will not deny.

And when the moon, like the great book  
Of judgment, golden with the light  
Of God, lies open o'er yon nook  
Of darkest hill and wildest height,  
Together they will cross the brook  
And reach the gate and kiss good-night.

## II.

And oft he wipes his hand along  
The beaded fire of his brow  
Hard toil has heated ; and the strong

Face flushes fuller health as now  
He fills his hay-fork with a song,  
And, tossing it, again doth bow.

And now he stops to look away  
Across the sun-fierce hills and meads  
No rolling cloud has cooled to-day ;  
And from his face the brawny beads  
Drip ; and he marks the hills of hay,  
The fields of maize, the fields of weeds.

He sees wild walls of tempest build  
Black battlements along the west,  
Black breastworks that are thunder-filled ;  
And bares his brow ; and on his chest  
The sweat of toil is cooled ; and stilled  
The pulse of toil within his breast.

A strong wind brings the odorous death  
Of far hay-makings, and the scent  
Is good within his nostrils' breath ;  
The mighty trees are bowed, that leant  
For none yet, as when Power saith  
“ Bow down ! ” and stalwart slaves are bent.

He laughs, long-gazing as he goes  
Along the elder-sweetened lane :  
He feels the storm wind as it blows

Across the sheaves of golden grain,  
And stops to pull one bramble-rose,  
And watch the silver slanting rain.

And there among low trees the farm  
Dreams in a martin-haunted place ;  
He marks the far-off streaks of storm  
That with the driven thunders race ;  
He sees his baby on her arm,  
And in the door her smiling face.

### III.

Below the sunset's range of rose,  
Below the heaven's bending blue,  
Down woodways where the balsam grows,  
And milk-weed tufts are gray with dew,  
A Jersey heifer stops and lows ;  
The cows come home by one, by two.

There is no star yet ; but the smell  
Of hay and pennyroyal mix  
With herb-aromas of the dell  
Where the root-hidden cricket ticks ;  
Among the iron-weeds a bell  
Clangs near the rail-fenced clover-ricks.

She waits upon the slope beside  
The windlassed well the plum-trees shade,  
The well-curb that the goose-plums hide ;

Her light hand on the bucket laid,  
Unbonneted she waits, glad-eyed,  
Her dress as simple as her braid.

She sees fawn-colored backs among  
The sumachs now ; a tossing horn  
Some clashing bell of copper rung ;  
Long shadows lean upon the corn,  
And all the day dies insect-stung,  
Where clouds float crimson skeins of yarn.

Below the pleasant moon, that tips  
The tree-tops of the hillside, fly  
The evening bats ; the twilight slips  
Some fireflies like spangles by ;  
She meets him, and their happy lips  
Touch where glad glories drown the sky.

He takes her bucket, and they speak  
Of married hopes while in the grass  
The plum lies glowing as her cheek ;  
The patient cows look back or pass,  
While in the west one golden streak  
Burns as if God gazed through a glass.

IV.

The skies are amber blue and green  
Before the coming of the sun ;  
And all the deep hills sleep serene

As pale enchantment, never done ;  
The morning mists drag down or lean  
On woods in which vague whispers run.

Birds wake ; and on the vine-grown knob,  
Above the brook, a twittering  
Confuses songs day cannot rob  
The building birds of where they swing ;  
And now a sudden throat will throb  
Wild music, and the thrush will sing.

The sun is up ; the hills are heaped  
With instant splendor ; and the vales  
Surprised with shimmers that are steeped  
In purple where the white mist trails ;  
The water-fall, the rock it leaped,  
Are burning gold that foams and fails.

He drives his horses to the plow  
Along the vineyard slopes, that bask  
Dew-beaded grapes, half-ripened now,  
In sun-shot shafts the shadows mask ;—  
He feels the morning like a vow  
Of faith that helps him with his task.

Before him, soaring through the mist,  
The wild hawk drifts gray wings and screams ;  
Its dewy back gleams, sunbeam-kissed,  
Above the wood that drips and dreams ;

He guides the plow with one strong fist ;  
The soil rolls back in level seams.

Packed to the right the sassafras  
Lifts leafy walls of spice that shade  
The blackberries, whose tendrils mass  
Big berries in the coolness made ;  
They drop black ripeness on the grass  
Where fallen trumpet-flowers fade.

White on the left the fence and trees  
That mark the garden ; and the smoke  
Uncurling in the early breeze ;  
The roof beneath the acorn oak ;—  
He turns his team, and turning sees  
The damp, dark soil his coulter broke.

Bees buzz ; and o'er the berries poise  
Lean-bodied wasps ; loud blackbirds turn  
Across the corn ; there is a noise  
Of eager wings and winds that burn ;—  
And now he seems to hear her voice,  
The song she sings to help her churn.

## v.

There are no clouds that drift around  
The moon's pearl-kindled crystal, (white  
As some sky-summoned spirit wound  
In raiment lit with limbs of light,)

That have not softened like the sound  
Of harps when Heaven forgets to smite.

The vales are deeper than the dark,  
And darker than the vales the woods  
That mounting hill and meadow mark  
With broad, blurred lines of solitudes :—  
Far off a fox-hound bays and barks  
Impatient of the calm that broods.

And though the night is never still,  
Yet what we name its noises makes  
Its silence :—now a whippoorwill ;  
A frog whose hoarser tremor breaks ;  
And now the insect sounds that fill  
The hush ; an owl that hoots and wakes . . . .

They lean against the gate that leads  
Into the lane that lies between  
The yard and orchard ; flowers and weeds  
Are odorous,—as if the keen  
Scents day poured in hot leaves and seeds  
Night's dews distil from out the green.

Their infant sleeps. They feel the peace  
Of something done that God has blessed,  
Soft as the pulse that will not cease  
There in the cloud that haunts the west ;  
The peace that love shall still increase  
While soul in soul still finds its rest.



## AN EPIC OF SOUTH-FORK.

## I.

THE wild brook gleams on the sand and ripples  
Over the rocks of the riffle ; brimming  
Under the elms like a nymph whose nipples  
Lift and vanish and shine in swimming ;  
Under the linns and the ash-trees lodging,  
Loops of the limpid waters lie,  
Shaken of schools of the minnows, dodging  
The sudden wings of the butterfly.

Lower, the loops are lips of laughter  
Over the stones and the crystal gravel ;  
Lower, the lips are a look seen after  
Song and laughter that lips unravel :  
Lengths of the shadowy water, shaken  
Of the dropping bark of the sycamore,  
Where the water-snake, that the noises waken,  
Slides like a crooked root from shore.

Peace of the forest ; the peace made dimmer  
Than dreams. And now a wing that winnows  
The willow leaves with their shadows slimmer  
In the shallow there than a school of minnows

Calm of the creek ; and a huge tree twisted,  
    Ringed and turned to a tree of pearl ;  
A gray-eyed man who is farmer-fisted,  
    And a dark-eyed, sinewy country girl.

The brow of the man is gnarled and wrinkled  
    With the weight of the words that have just been  
        spoken ;  
And the girl has smiled and her eyes have twinkled,  
    Though the bonds and the bands of her love are  
        broken :  
She smiles, nor knows how the days have knotted  
    Her to the heart of the man who says :  
“ Let us follow the paths that we think allotted ;  
    I will go my ways and you your ways.

“ And the man between us is your decision.  
    Worse or better he is your lover.—  
Shall I name him worse that the long Elysian  
    Prize he wins where I discover  
Only the hell of the luckless chooser ?—  
    Shall I name him better or hold him more  
Since he is winner and I am loser,  
    His life 's made rich and mine made poor ? ”

“ I tell you now as I oft and ever  
    Have told,” she answered, the laughter dying  
Down in her eyes, “ that his words have never  
    Held me so—but you think me lying,

And you are wrong. And I think it better  
To part forever than still to dwell  
With the sad distrust, like an evil tetter,  
On our lives forever, and so farewell."

And she turned away ; and he watched her going,  
The girlish pride in her eyes a-smoulder :  
He saw her go, and his limbs were glowing  
Fever that parched. And he stood, one shoulder  
Slouched to the tree ; and he saw her stooping  
There by the bank with a cautious foot,  
Straighten, and tear from her breast the drooping  
Lilies and fasten the Pleurisy-root.

With its orange fire he saw her passing  
On and on, and the blood beat, burning  
His brain to blisters ; an endless massing  
Of wounds and bruises of deathless yearning.  
—Butterflies sucked in the moist sand-alleys ;  
A fairy fleet of Ionian sails  
Were their wings ; or the sails of pirate galleys,  
Maroon and yellow, for elfland gales.—

He watched her going ; and harder, thicker  
The pulse of his breath and his heart's hard  
throbbing.  
—How should he know that her heart was sicker ?  
How should he know that her soul was sobbing ?

She never looked back : and he saw her vanish  
In swirls of the startled butterflies,  
Like a storm of flowers, and could not banish  
The look of love from his face and eyes.

## II.

He heard the cocks crow out the lonely hours.  
How long the night and very far the dawn !  
It seemed long months since he had seen the  
flowers,  
The leaves, the sunlight, and the beehived lawn ;  
Had heard the thrush flute in the tangled showers.

His burning eyes ached, staring at the black  
Stolidity of midnight. Would it send  
No cool reprieve unto his mind,—a rack  
Of inquisition,—tortures to unbend,  
That stretched him forward and now strained him  
back ?

Invisible and sad and undivulged,—  
The thought that made him think of summer  
walks  
Through woods on which the sudden perfumes  
bulged,  
The bird-songs and the brilliant-blossomed stalks ;  
And that young freedom which their talk indulged.

Oh, strong appeal ! And he would almost yield ;  
When, firmly forward, he could feel her fault  
Oppose the error of a rock-like shield,  
And to resisting phalanxes cry halt—  
And, lo ! bright cohorts broken on the field.

O mulct of morning, to the despot night  
Count down unminted gold, and let the day  
Walk free from dreadful dungeons, and delight  
Herself on mountains of the violet ray,  
Clad in white maidenhood and maiden white !

A melancholy coast, plunged deep in dream  
And death and silence, stretched the drizzling  
dark,  
Wherein he heard a round-eyed screech-owl scream  
In lamentation, and a watch-dog bark,  
A voiced oblivion, at night's hollow stream.

And then hope moved him to divide the blinds  
To see if those bright sparkles were a star's  
Or only his hot eyeballs', which the mind's  
Commotion weighed.—No slightest ravel mars  
With glimmer heaven's swart tapestry he finds.

Yet he remained refreshed, until the first  
Exploring crevices of Aztec morn,

Dim cracks of treasure, Eldorados burst :

Then could he face his cowardice and scorn  
This weakness which his manhood had immersed.

It knew no barriers now. And where it went

Each twisting path was musical with birds ;  
Each weed was richer with diviner scent ;

For love sought love with such expressive words  
That dawn's delivery was less eloquent.

### III.

Who is it hunts with his dog

There where the heron is flying

Gray in the feathering fog

Over the hillside that 's lying,

There by the butternut log

Where night heard the screech-owl crying ?

Who is it hunts in the brush

Under the linns and the beeches,

Here where the Fork is a blush

In the rocks that the noon never reaches ?

Here where the bank is a crush

Of flags with a bloom like the peach's ?

He is handsome and supple and tall,

Blond-haired and vigorous-chested,

Blue-eyed as the bud by the fall

Where he listens,—his rifle half rested,  
Half leaned on the crumbling stone-wall,—  
And his face, it rarely has jested.

He waits ; and the sun on the dew  
Of the cedars and leaves of the bushes  
Strikes glittering frostiness through. . . .  
If a covey of partridges flushes  
What good will a Winchester do,  
Or the dog to his feet that he crushes ?

As something breaks strong through the weeds  
Where the buck-bushes toss and the higher  
Snakeroot with its spiring seeds,  
Wild carrots, are trammelling wire  
Round the path to the creek-road that leads . . .  
Shall he know, shall he see ere he fire ?

. . . From the leaves of the wind-shaken wood  
Thick drops of the night-dew are falling.  
He is gone from the place where he stood  
Just there where the black crow is calling.  
There is blood on the weeds : is it blood  
Down the face of the man that is crawling ?

Red blood or a smudge of the dawn ?  
And he lies with his gray eyes wide staring  
Stiff, still at the sun : he has drawn

His limbs in a heap : and the faring  
Bee-martins light near and are gone :  
But the tomtit and wren, they are daring.

It is noon ; and the wood-dove is deep  
In the calm of its cooing ; and over  
The tops of the forest trees sweep  
The shadows of buzzards that hover ;  
The wild-hawk sails on as asleep,  
And the bob-white is whistling from cover.

It is dusk ; and the wild flowers wilt  
With the sadness of crime in their faces ;  
The blue wild petunias tilt  
To the larkspur in death-darkened places ;  
On the wild sweet-williams are spilt  
The sunset or guiltier traces ?

It is night ; and the hoot-owlet mocks  
The dove of the day with weird weeping :  
The creek is a groan 'mid the rocks  
Where the 'coon through the briers is creeping :  
Through the woods snaps the bark of the fox—  
But the dead, they are deaf in their sleeping.

#### IV.

Night flies and day is here,—  
God's fairer ultimate  
Of causes never clear



To lives that will not wait ;—  
Day dies and night is near,  
And love is over-late.

A storm has rent great limbs,  
And bent the wooded ridge ;  
Each swollen shallow swims  
Head-deep below the bridge ;  
The drift, that breaks and brims,  
Floats lighter than the midge.

Dusk dies and night is gray  
With shadows and with rain ;  
The forests sound and sway  
Like monsters wrenched with pain ;  
Night deepens on the way—  
And shall she wait in vain ?

The Fork is whirling wreck  
Of field and hill and wood ;  
And many a moon-wan fleck  
Floats where the rock-fence stood ;—  
A current rolls break-neck  
Above the washed-out blood.

Night deepens : and she waits  
Expectant in despair :  
The Fork has reached the gates,

The wood's wreck everywhere.  
Night deepens ; and she hates  
The man that will not dare.

She sees the lightning rush  
Blaze-boiling hells above ;  
She hears the thunder crush  
Heaven as if devils clove—  
Bowed in the lightning's flush  
Through wind and rain comes love.

He comes she feels, and stands  
The rushing waters o'er  
Her feet, and on her hands  
And hair the rains that pour,  
And sees the instant lands  
Light-looming from her door.

Night deepens ; but she knows  
Love will not fail to send  
Reprieve to her young woes,  
And one day's errors mend.—  
The wild stream foams and flows  
In booming fall and bend.—

Again the lightnings light  
The night like some wild torch ;  
The waters foam and fight ;

And one uprooted larch  
Drives down, with something white  
Wedged in it, by her porch.

She stoops : the lurid rain  
Beats on her back and head—  
Ay ! he hath come again  
With livid lips once red !  
A bullet in his brain  
The night hath brought him—dead !

## A NIELLO.

## I.

IT is not early spring and yet  
Of lamb's-tongue banks above the stream,  
And blotted banks of violet  
My heart will dream.

Is it because the wind-flower ayes  
The beauty that was once her brow,  
That the white thought of it still shapes  
The April now ?

Because the wild-rose learned to blush  
In tune with cheeks of maidenhood,  
I find full Junetide in bare brush  
And empty wood ?

Why will I think how young she died !—  
Straight, barren death stalks down the trees,  
The hard-eyed hours by his side  
That kill and freeze.

## II.

When orchards are in bloom again  
My heart will bound, my blood will beat,

To hear the red-bird so repeat  
On apple boughs his strain ;  
His blithe, loud song, heard through the rain  
In summer, now among the bloom,—  
Where all the bees and hornets boom,—  
Inviting to remain.

When orchards are in bloom once more,  
Evasions of dear dreams will draw  
My feet, like some persistent law,  
Through blossoms to her door :  
And I shall ask her, as before,  
“ To let me help her at the well ” ;  
And fill her pail ; and long to tell  
My secret, o'er and o'er.

I shall not speak until we quit  
The farm-gate, buried in its stain  
Of orchards all in bloom again,  
And see the wood-dove sit  
And call ; and through the blossoms flit  
The cat-bird crying while he flies ;  
Then bashfully I'll praise her eyes,  
And cheeks with gladness lit.

And it may be that she will place  
Her trust in me as once before,—  
When orchards are in bloom once more,—  
With all her sweet girl grace :

And we shall tarry till a trace  
Of sunset dyes the heaven, and then—  
To tell her all ; and bend again  
To kiss her quiet face !

And homeward, humming, I shall go  
Along the cricket-chirring ways,  
When all the west, one crimson blaze,  
Blooms as if orchards blow  
Piled petals in it. I shall know  
Glad youth once more and have her here,  
Who has been dead this many a year,  
To make my old heart glow.

### III.

I would not die when Springtime lifts  
The white world to her maiden mouth,  
And heaps its cradle with gay gifts,  
Breeze-blown from out the singing south :  
Too glad for death the wind and rain ;  
Too heedless for earth's wildest woe  
The young hypocrisy of pain  
That will not let you know.

I would not die when Summer shakes  
Her daisied locks below her hips,  
And, naked as a star that takes  
A cloud, into the water slips :

Too rich were earth for my poor needs  
In egotism of loveliness ;  
The apathy that never heeds  
If grief be more or less.

But I would die when Autumn goes,  
The wild rain dripping from her hair,  
Through forests where the wild wind blows  
Death and the red wreck everywhere :  
Sweet as love's last farewells and tears  
To fall asleep in the sad days,  
With patience and with faith that nears  
The mist that God shall raise.

## WRECKAGE.

SUCH love has drifted out of dreams  
Under the moon of a Florida night,  
Over the beach with its silver seams,  
White as a sail is white ;

Such days have entered into some lives  
Out of the love that the nights have borne,  
Over the waves where the vapor drives,  
Mists that the stars have torn ;

Such songs have welded two hearts and hands  
Out of the sea and the summer moon,  
Out of the stars and the mists and sands,  
Setting two lives in tune ;

Days of love and the love will keep  
Truth and hope and the faith as one—  
Care will sing and the hate will weep  
Loss that the love begun.

. . . . .



## I.

Parting he said to her : " We are not true to them,  
Gifts of the seasons : the night and the morning,  
Love and the loss of all love, that 's a clew to  
them,

Trust that is hope, and a faith never scorning.  
Have you considered the life that regretfully  
Foldeth weak arms to the fate it could master ?  
Slave of all circumstance, sadly and fretfully  
Whines for the comfort that cometh no faster ? "

They had come down to the ocean that, bellowing,  
Boiled on the sand and the shells that were  
broken ;

All of the season was faded and yellowing ;  
All of their misery of love had been spoken.  
It had befallen the heavens were lowering ;  
Over the sea, like the wraith of a wrecker,  
Clamored the gull ; and the mist in the showering  
East seemed the ghost of a lofty three-decker.

Infinite foam ; and the boom of the hollowing  
Breakers that buried the rocks to their shoulders ;  
Battle and boast of the deep in the wallowing  
World of the waves where the red sunset  
smoulders.

Long was the leap of the foam on the thunderous  
Beach ; and each end of the beach was a flying

Toss of the spray. "Let our cares vanish under  
us ;  
Doing, be hope of us now, and not dying !"

Yet, if it came to the part he has said to her  
"Strive with and master?"—What grief could  
have striven,  
Weaker than all that is woman, he dead to her,  
There in the weeds and the waves that are  
driven !  
Where, in the morning, farewells they have taken,  
now  
Must be repeated with tears, though the sailor  
Sailed with a laugh, that her kiss will not waken  
now,  
Sealed with the salt on the lips that are paler.

## 2.

All day the rain drove, falling  
Upon the sombre sea ;  
All day, his wet sail hauling,  
The sailor tacked a-lea ;  
And through the wild rain calling,  
I heard her calling me.

At dusk the gull clanged, drifting  
Above the boiling brine ;  
And, through the wan west sifting,

Streamed one wan sunset line ;  
And, to my gray eyes lifting,  
Her sad eyes gazed in mine.

All night the wind wailed, sighing  
Along the wreck-strewn coast ;  
All night the surf, defying,  
Rolled thunder in and boast ;  
All night I heard her crying,  
A ghost that called a ghost

## 3.

The balm of the night and the glory,  
The music and scent of the sea,  
Are a part of our lives, and the story  
Of thee and of me.—  
The stars of the night, and the whiteness  
Of foam on the stretch of the sand,  
The foam that is flung, and the lightness  
Of hand within hand.

No sail on the ocean ; no sailor  
On shore, and the winds all asleep ;  
And thy face in the starlight far paler  
Than women who weep.  
A mist on the deep that was ghostly ;  
A moon in the deep of the skies ;  
The mist and the moon, they were mostly  
In thee and thine eyes.

No sea-gull to vanish with gleaming  
Of wings, but the swing of the spray  
And a sense of unutterable dreaming  
That bore me away.

No wind and no wing, but their essence,  
And all that is grayest and dim,  
In the mermaiden grace of thy presence,  
In look and in limb.

That night of strange cries ! and to perish  
So out of our lives that were bare,  
Yet ached with the yearning to cherish  
With patience and prayer !  
For thou wast a sea-mist made woman,  
And I was a sound of the sea  
Made man—but nothing was human  
In thee and in me.

## 4.

And one had sought the deep that glasses  
The face of God and His majesty ;  
And one still sought the gulf that passes  
Life and its mystery.  
Time and tears and the days that ever  
Burden the back of the days to be ;  
Strife and grief and the seas that sever  
Love in a ship at sea.

One had come where the reef rolled broken  
Foam of the baulked waves everywhere ;  
Waves that tangle the weeds and oaken  
Wreck and a dead man's hair.

One had come where the sand laid livid  
Paths of ease which the sea-gulls share ;  
The wing of the gull in the light less vivid  
Light than the gladness there.

Winds that gallop with strength and splendor  
Steeds of the surf with their streaming manes  
Surf that batters the coast's defender,  
Surf that the rock disdains :  
Storm that hunts in his sounding sandals,  
Hounds of thunder he holds with chains,  
Light that leaps like the spear he handles,  
Storm and the rush of rains.

Wrenching the wreck of the world asunder,  
Black rebellion of hell and night ;  
Wrath and roar of the rocks and thunder,—  
Might and the curse of might.—  
Beating the drift and the hush together,  
Waves and wind that the morn makes white ;  
Calm and peace of the dove-dyed weather,—  
Light and the grace of light.

Clouds blow by and the storm's forgotten.  
Savage coasts where the sea-cow feeds.

Wash of weeds and the sea weeds rotten.

And a dead face in the weeds.

None to know him or name him brother ;

Only the savage in feathers and beads ;

The South Sea Islander, fitting another

Flint in the shaft he speeds.

Clouds blow up and the sea-gulls gather ;

Clouds blow up and the evening falls ;

The lightning leaps and the sad sands lather,

Rolling the waves in walls :

Who shall tell her, sweetheart or sister,

Her who sings as the tempest calls ?

Suns that beat on his face and blister ?

Wind or the wave that crawls ?

. . . , . . . . .

This was his hope : that, by the ocean sitting,

Dawn would compel her grave eyes to behold,

Between the foam ridge and the sea-gull's flitting,

His body rolled.

All was not as it was before they parted ;

She said she would remember, and forgot ;

He said he would forget her, angry-hearted,

And yet could not.

She never knew : and, had she known, she surely  
Had given pity when she could not give  
Her love to him, who loved her madly, purely,  
And bade him live . . .

Between the seaweed and the rocks the slanted  
Hulk of a wreck : beyond the sand and wave,  
Worn with the wind and with the cactus planted,  
His nameless grave.

## HIEROGLYPHS.

## I.

MY dreams are older than the trees,  
Being but newer forms of change ;  
Some savage dreamed mine ; and 't was these  
De Leon sought where seas were strange.

My thoughts are older than the earth  
Being of beauty ages wrought ;  
Old when creation gave them birth,  
When Homer sang them, Shakespeare thought.

## 2.

If souls could travel with their thought  
Beyond the farthest arcs that span  
Worlds of imaginative man,  
Where thought is lightning fraught ;  
One would explore the stars, and one  
The science of each moon and sun  
Long evolutions wrought.

And one would seek out Hell ; and, wise  
In tortures of the damned, return  
To tell us how they freeze or burn,  
And where God's red Hell lies;



---

And one would look on Heaven ; and, mute  
With memories of harp and lute,  
Sit silent as the skies.

But I—on condor wings would sweep  
Back to cosmogony, and sit  
In firmaments volcano-lit,  
And see creation heap  
The awful Andes, vague and vast,  
Around the Inca-peopled past,  
While deep roared out to deep.

## 3.

Out of it all but this remains :—  
I was with one who passed wide chains  
Of the Cordilleras, whose peaks  
Lock in the wilds of Yucatan,  
Chiapas and Honduras. Weeks—  
And then a city that no man  
Had ever seen ; so dim and old,  
No chronicle has ever told  
The history of men who piled  
Its temples and huge teocallis  
Among mimosa-blooming valleys ;  
Or how its altars were defiled  
With human blood ; whose idols there  
With stony eyes still stand and stare.

So old the moon can only know  
How old, since ancient forests grow  
On mighty wall and pyramid.  
Huge ceibas, whose trunks were scarred  
With ages, and dense yuccas, hid  
Fanes, and the cacti, scarlet-starred.  
I looked upon its paven ways,  
And saw it in its pride and praise,  
When from the lordly palace one,  
A victim, walked with prince and priest,  
Who turned brown faces to the east  
In worship of the rising sun :  
At night ten thousand temple spires  
On gold burnt everlasting fires.

Uxmal? Palenque? or Copan?  
I know not. Only how no man  
Had ever seen ; and still my soul  
Believes it vaster than the three.  
Volcanic rock walled in the whole,  
Lost in the woods as in some sea.  
*I only* read its hieroglyphs,  
Perused its monster monoliths  
Of death, gigantic heads ; and read  
The pictured codex of its fate,  
The perished Toltec ; while in hate  
Mad monkeys cursed me, as if dead  
Priests of its past had taken form  
To guard their ruined shrines from harm.

## 4.

And then it was as if I talked  
Of flowers and beauty, like a God ;  
Mid Montezuma's priests who walked  
Obedient to my nod.

From Mexic levels breezes blew  
O'er green magueys, cacao fields ;  
I stood among caciques, a crew  
With plumes and golden shields.

In raiment made of humming-birds  
Brown slave-girls danced. All Anahuac  
Stood, grim with strange obsidian swords,  
Around the idol's rock.

And up the temple's winding stair  
Of pyramid we wound and went.  
The bloomed vanilla drenched the air  
With all its tropic scent.

Volcanoes walled us in ; and I  
Walked crowned with flaming cactus-flowers,  
Beneath the golden, Aztec sky,  
Lord of the living hours.

When, lo ! five priests who led me to  
A jasper stone of sacrifice !—  
Then deep within my soul I knew  
My pride's ignoble price.

A sixth priest, robed in cochineal,  
Received me at the altar's stone ;  
I saw the flint-blade, sharp as steel,  
That in his high hand shone.

O God ! to dream that they would bind—  
With pomp and pageant of their love—  
Me to the rock, and never blind  
Mine eyes to that above !

I felt the flint hack through my breast,  
And in my agony did raise  
Wild eyes, a little while to rest  
Upon their idol's face.

Just God ! the priest tore out my heart  
To hold it beating to the sun—  
And pain beheld Love's scarlet part  
In life that was undone.

Torn out, I felt my heart still beat—  
“ How sweet to die if thou wert mine ! ”—  
My heart, cast at the idol's feet  
Knew that the face was thine !

## 5.

She was a maiden like a dream.  
She led me where volcanic dust

Rained in a scoriac mountain stream.

The Andes rose in snow, or thrust  
Black craters belching stones and steam.

She was an Inca princess when

I was a cavalier of Spain,  
Who frowned among Pizarro's men

And watched the New World rent with pain—  
No grace of God could save me then !—

And it was she who led me far

To gaze on caves of Inca gold ;

Until we came where, warrior

On warrior, an army rolled

In savage panoply of war.

Fierce faces chiselled out of stone

Were not so stern.—Down underneath

I heard the sullen earthquake groan ;

Above me, red eruptions seeth ;

And set my teeth and stood alone.

And then she pled and was denied.—

They laid me where the lava crawled

Red rivers down the mountain side.

I felt the slow, slow hell-heat scald ;

And as it closed, she leapt and died.

## 6.

In farther planets there are men who talk  
With beaming eyes and brows that burn with  
    thought ;  
Pure souls whose sentiments need but be born  
To be expressed. Where speech of mouth and  
    tongue  
Were barbarous discord. Where no voice imparts  
Thought, but divulging eye and sensitive brow.  
Superior planets far beyond our sphere,  
And nearer God than ages shall combine  
To lift our world up with its wrangling woes.  
Worlds that are strange to sickness and disease  
Of mind or body ; perfect mentally,—  
Past what we name perfection here on Earth,—  
And physically. Morally divine  
As creeds have taught us God's high Heaven is.  
Worlds where Love makes no playmate of vile  
    Lust ;  
Where Hope makes no companion of Despair ;  
Where Power can not trample with fierce feet ;  
And, impotent, the iron hand of Might  
Surrenders its red weapon unto Mind ;  
Where Truth and Thought are wedded, in one rule  
Of far progressions, whose white child is Love.

So have I thought, and longed to leave sad Earth  
To live anew on some sublimer sphere ;  
A world so higher, lovelier than is this,

So spiritually perfected and refined,  
Should one behold, behold ! one would fall prone  
In worship and astonishment ; and all  
The exaltation of celestial peace  
Declare within his soul, “ Yea, this is Heaven !  
How long, O sinner, hast thou dwelt in Hell ! ”

## 7.

An iron despotism the day's :  
A brutal anarchy the night's :  
What hope for hope when day betrays  
To night's ignoble spites !

For once I prayed for gulfs of gold,  
And eve spread pools of sombre blood ;  
Clean skies of stars, and skies behold—  
Malignant with the scud.

And so I marvel not that he,  
Gray-haired and palsied, hugs his stove  
While I my youth, which once was she,  
Have buried with my love.

## 8.

All thoughts of Nature are its forms :  
Life, love and death : these God began :  
Sun-systems that are still in storms,  
Evolving worlds to perfect man.

Thoughts are the forms of Mind : and plumb  
Effects to causes : Calculate  
From intellect the mighty sum  
Of truth as spirit ultimate.



## SIREN SANDS.

## I.

THE rhododendrons sleep and take  
The dew-drops they would weep away,  
Among palmettoes of the lake  
Beyond the bay.

Shores where we watched the eve reveal  
Her cloudy sanctuaries, while  
The bay lay lavaed into steel  
For mile on mile.

We watched the purple coast confuse  
Soft outlines with the graying light ;  
And towards the gulf a vessel lose  
Itself in night.

We saw the sea-gulls dip and soar ;  
The wild-fowl gather past the pier ;  
And from rich skies, as from God's door,  
Gold far and near.

Two foreign seamen passed and we  
Heard mellow Spanish ; like twin stars,  
Where they lounged smoking we could see  
Their faint cigars.

Night ; and the heavens stained and strewn  
With stars dark waters realized,  
Until their light the brightening moon  
Epitomized.

Night—but the pine-wood balms will wake ;  
Buds laugh the dew-drop from each face ;  
The bay will burn and on the lake  
The ripple race.

Far coasts detach deep purple from  
The blue horizon, and the day  
Behold the sunburnt sailor come  
To sail away.

The bird that dreamed at dusk, at dawn  
Will sing again.—And who shall pine ?  
Not I ! for thou, when night is gone,  
Wilt still be mine.

2.

Through halls of columned scarlet  
Like some dim queen, the Dusk  
Trails stately skirts of musk,  
Hung in each ear a starlet,  
Weird jewels of the Jinn ;  
And golden 'neath her chin  
The moon, a gem-like tusk.

There lies a ghostly glory  
Along the sea and sand,  
That, like a knightly band  
From lands of sacred story,  
Kneels on the ray-red spray ;  
A crusade stopped to pray  
Beneath God's shielding hand.

Up flaming mountains millions  
In burning pentecosts ;  
Love's beauty-blinding hosts,  
And radiance-raised pavilions  
Among celestial flowers—  
Earth's sense of angel hours,  
The after ghosts of ghosts.

## 3.

Music that melts in moonlight,  
Out of the summer breeze ;  
Fireflies, moonlight, and foaming  
Susurrus of the seas.

Music that drifts from perfume,  
Soft as the touch of a hand ;  
Dreams and stars and the ocean,  
And two on the fluted sand.

Glimmers of vague reflections,  
And the white flame of the foam

Pale on the purple a vessel,  
And a song to sing it home.

And I dream the dream of the music,  
And the firefly spark that floats,  
For the music is glittering magic,  
And the flies are its golden notes.

And again you are singing the story  
Of the brown old coast and sea,  
Of the lives that lived for passion,  
In an old-world melody :—

SONG.

*“ Over the hills where the winds are waking  
All is lone as the soul of me ;  
Over the hills where the stars are shaking,  
Breton hills by the sea.*

*“ These were with me to tell me often  
How she pined in her Croisic home,  
Winds that sing and the stars that soften  
Over the miles of foam.*

*“ Fishers’ nets and the sailor faces,  
Sad salt-marshes and granite piers,  
Brown, loud coast where the long foam races—  
And a parting full of tears.*

*" A gray sail's ghost where the autumn lies on  
Wraiths of the mist and the squall-blown rain ;  
Her dark, girl eyes that search the horizon,  
Grave with a haunting pain.*

*" Stars may burn or the wild winds whistle  
Over the rocks where the sea-gulls rave—  
My heart is bleak as the wind-worn thistle  
Dead on her sea-side grave." . . .*

And I hear the harsh reef's hunger  
For a noble ship at sea,  
And the voices of mermaids singing  
The sea's old tragedy ;

Till I am the doomed ship's pilot,  
And you are the mermaiden,  
Who lures him on to the wrecking  
And into her arms again.

## 4.

Sad as sad eyes that ache with tears  
The stars of night shine through the leaves ;  
And barren as the nunlike years,  
The shades that darkness weaves.

The summer sunset marched long hosts  
Of gold adown one golden peak,

That flamed and fell ; and now gray ghosts  
Watch where the moon is weak.

Appealing years and eyes that weep ;  
Moon-mists that beckon or conceal ;  
Wan thoughts naught-medicines to sleep ;  
Wan wounds that will not heal.

And heaven now hoarse with storm, that slips  
Wild angles of the jagged light ;—  
I kiss the wild rain from her lips,  
And shield her from the night.

A moaning tremor in the trees ;  
And all the stars packed with black death ;—  
I hold her by the neck and knees  
And kiss away her breath.

Hell and hag Night drive on the rain ;—  
I hold her by the hair and plead :  
She beats my face with blows again,  
With hands that burn and bleed.

The thunder plants deep cohorts on  
The volleying heights—I should have known  
How long it is that she is gone,  
And I how long alone !

## AT THE LANE'S END.

## I.

NO more to strip the roses from  
The rose-boughs of her porch's place !—  
I dreamed last night that I was home  
Beside a rose—her face.

I must have smiled asleep—who knows?—  
The rose aroma filled the lane ;  
I saw her white hand's lifted rose  
That called me home again.

And yet when I awoke—so wan,  
An old face wet with icy tears !—  
Somehow, it seems, sleep had misdrawn  
A love gone thirty years.

## 2.

The clouds roll up and the clouds roll down  
Over the roofs of the little town ;  
Out in the hills, where the pike winds by  
Fields of clover and bottoms of rye,  
You will hear no sound but the barking cough  
Of the striped chipmunk where the lane leads off ;

You will hear no bird but the sapsucker  
Far off in the forest,—that seems to purr,  
As the warm wind fondles its tops, grown hot  
Like the docile back of an ocelot ;  
You will see no thing but the shine and shade  
Of briars that climb and of weeds that wade  
The glittering creeks of the sun, that fills  
The dusty road and the red-keel hills :  
And all day long in the pennyroy'l  
The grasshoppers at their anvils toil ;  
Thick click of their tireless hammers thrum,  
And the wheezy belts of their bellows hum ;  
Tinkers who solder the silence and heat  
To make the loneliness more complete.

Around old rails where the blackberries  
Are reddening ripe, and the bumble bees  
Are a drowsy rustle of Summer's skirts,  
And the bobwhite's wing is the fan she flirts,  
Under the hill, through the iron-weeds,  
And blue mist-flowers and milk-weeds, leads  
The path forgotten of all but one—  
Where elder bushes are sick with sun  
And wild raspberries branch big blue veins  
On the face of the rock, where the old spring rains  
Its sparkling splinters of molten spar  
On the gravel bed where the tadpoles are,  
You will find the pales of the fallen fence,  
And the tangled orchard and vineyard, dense



With the weedy neglect of thirty years ;  
The garden there,—where the soft sky clears  
Like an old, sweet face that has dried its tears;—  
The garden plot where the cabbage grew  
And the pompous pumpkin ; and beans that blew  
Balloons of white by the melon patch ;  
Maize ; and tomatoes that seemed to catch  
Oblong amber and agate balls  
Thrown from the sun in the frosty Falls ;  
The rows of currents and gooseberries,  
And the balsam-gourd with its honey-bees ;  
And here was a nook for the princess-plumes,  
And the snap-dragons and the poppy blooms,  
Mother's sweet-williams and pansy flowers,  
And the morning-glory's bewildered bowers  
Tipping their cornucopias up  
For the humming-birds that came to sup ;  
And over it all was the Sabbath peace  
Of the land whose lap was the love of these ;  
And the old log-house where my innocence died,  
With my boyhood buried side by side.

Shall a man with a face as withered and gray  
As the wasp-nest stowed in a loft away,  
Where the hornets haunt and the mortar drops  
From the loosened logs of the clapboard tops ;  
That vice has aged, as the rotting rooms  
The rain where memories haunt the glooms ;  
A hitch in his joints like the rheum that gnars

In the rasping hinge of the door that jars ;  
A harsh, cracked throat like the old stone flue  
Where the swallows build the summer through ;  
Shall a man, I say, with the spider sins  
That the coarse years spin, in the outs and ins  
Of his soul, returning to see once more  
His boyhood's home, where his life was poor  
With toil and tears and their fretfulness,  
But rich with health and the hopes that bless  
The unsoiled wealth of a vigorous youth ;  
Shall he not take comfort and know the truth  
In its threadbare raiment of falsehood ?—Yea !  
In his crumbled past he shall kneel and pray,  
Like a pilgrim come to the shrine again  
Of the homely saints that shall soothe his pain,  
And arise and depart made clean from stain !

## 3.

Years of care cannot erase  
Visions of the hills and trees  
Closing in the dam and race ;  
Nor the mile-long memories  
Of the mill-stream's lovely place.

How the sunsets used to stain  
Mirror of the water lying  
Under eaves made dark with rain !  
Where the red-bird, nestward-flying,  
Lit to try one bar again.

Dingles, hills, and woods and springs,  
Where we came in calm and storm,  
Swinging in the grape-vine swings,  
Wading where the rocks were warm,  
With our fishing nets and strings.

Here the road plunged down the hill,  
Under ash and chinquapin,—  
Where the grasshoppers would drill  
Ears of silence with their din,—  
To the willow-girdled mill.

There the path beyond the ford  
Takes the woodside, just below  
Shallows that the lilies sword,  
Where the scarlet blossoms blow  
Of the trumpet-vine and gourd.

Summer winds that sink with heat,  
On the pelted waters winnow  
Moony petals, that repeat  
Crescents, where the startled minnow  
Beats a glittering retreat.

Summer winds, that bear the scent  
Of the iron-weed and mint,  
Weary with sweet freight and spent,  
On the deeper pools imprint  
Stumbling steps the ripples dent.

Summer winds that split the husk  
Of the peach and nectarine,  
Blow beyond the crimson dusk  
Hazy skirts, but faintly seen,  
Spilling balms of dew and musk.

Where with balls of bursting juice  
Summer sees the red wild-plum  
Strew the gravel ; ripened loose,  
Autumn hears the pawpaw drum  
Plumpness on the rocks that bruise :

Here we found the water-beech,  
Some forgotten August noon,  
With its hornet-nest in reach,  
Like a Fairyland balloon,  
Full of bustling fairy speech.

Some invasion sure it was :  
For we heard the captains scold ;  
Waspish cavalry a-buzz,—  
Troopers uniformed in gold  
Sable-slashed,—to charge on us.

Could I find the sedgy angle,  
Where the dragon-flies would turn  
Slender flittings into spangle  
On the sunlight ? or would burn  
Where the berries made a tangle,

Sparkling green and brazen blue?  
Rendezvoused about the stream  
Turbaned gay banditti, who,  
Brigands of the bloom and beam,  
Drunken were with honey-dew.

Could I find the pond that lay  
Where vermilion blossoms showered  
Fragrance down the daisied way?  
And the sassafras embowered  
Sap and spice of early May?

In the twilight might I seek  
The old mill! Its weather-beaten  
Wheel and gable by the creek;  
And its warping roof; worm-eaten,  
Dusty rafters worn and weak.

Where old shadows haunt old places,  
Loft and hopper, stair and bin;  
Ghostly with the dust that laces  
Webs that usher phantoms in,  
Wistful with remembered faces.

While the frogs' grave litanies  
Drowse in far-off antiphone,  
Supplicating, till the eyes  
Of dead friendships,—long alone  
In the dingy corners,—rise.

Moonrays or the splintered slip  
Of a star.—In twinkling darkle  
Of the night the fire-flies dip—  
As if Night betrayed the sparkle  
Of rich jewels through a rip.

And once more my boyhood crosses,  
With a corn-sack for the meal,  
Through the sprinkled ferns and mosses,  
To the gray mill's lichen wheel,  
Where the water drips and tosses.

## DEEP IN THE FOREST.

## I.

## A COIGNE.

THE hills hang woods around, and green below  
Dark, breezy boughs of beeches mats the moss,  
Crisp with the brittle hulls of last year's nuts ;  
The water hums one bar there ; and a glow  
Of gold lies steady where the trailers toss  
Red, toppling bugles and a rock abuts ;  
In spots the wild-phlox and oxalis blow  
Where beech roots bulge the loam, and welt across  
The whole dense hillside in protruding ruts.

And where the sumach brakes grow dusk and  
dense,  
Among the briers, yellow violets,  
Lamb's-tongues and wind-flowers bloom ; the  
agaric  
In dampness crowds ; a fungus, made intense  
With gold and crimson and wax-white, that sets  
The May-apples along the terraced creek  
At gay defiance. Where the old rail-fence  
Divides the hollow, there the bee-bird whets  
His bill, and there the elder hedge is thick.

No one can miss it ; for two cat-birds nest,  
Calling all morning, in the trumpet-vine ;  
And there at noon the pewee sits and floats  
A woodland welcome ; and his very best  
At eve the blue-jay sings, as if to sign  
The record of its loveliness with notes :  
At night the moon stoops over it to rest,  
And unreluctant stars ; where waters shine  
There runs a whisper as of wind-swept oats.

## II.

## EVASION.

And shall I seek upon the hills  
For hints the orchards follow ?  
Where wild-plum trees make wan the hills  
And apple-trees the hollow,  
Beneath the soaring swallow ?

In red-bud brakes and flowery  
Acclivities of berry ;  
In dog-wood dingles showery  
With dew the sun makes merry,  
And drifts of swarming cherry ?

In valleys of wild strawberries,  
And of the white May-apple ;  
Or cloud-like trees of hawberries,  
With which the south-winds grapple,  
And all the broad brook dapple ?



Whose eyes are dark forgetfulness,—  
To see the forest's daughter,—  
Whose feet are bee-like fretfulness,  
Strive like a running water  
In boughs that kissed and caught her.

To see you, yet to find you not,  
To seek you and continue ;  
With hurrying hands that bind you not,  
Since one may never win you  
With striving soul and sinew.

In pearly, peach-blush distances  
Light limbs that have evaded  
The eager heart's persistences,  
The rock-paved brook that waded,  
With chestnut branches shaded.

O presence, like the primrose's,  
Still hold me in your power !  
With rainy scents of dim roses,  
That led me for an hour  
To find this one frail flower.

## III.

## THE WOOD-SPIRIT.

Ah me ! I still remember  
How flushed, before the shower,  
The dusk was, like a scarlet rose,  
Or blood-red poppy flower.

The heaven hath stars ; the moonlight  
Lays blurs upon the grain—  
You may not know it from white frost,  
The moonlight on the rain.

And all the forest utters  
A restless moan in rest,  
For all the deep, dull shadow lies  
Like iron in its breast.

I mark the shocks of shadow,  
I mark the unmown corn,  
The white, weird moonlight overhead—  
Would God I 'd ne'er been born !

I sit alone and listen ;  
The far leaves sound and sigh ;  
The dew drips from the bearded grain,  
The mist slips from the sky.—

I hear her whisper whispers,  
And breathe in yon gray place ;  
Her feet are easier than the dew,  
And than the mist her face.

She will not hear me, never !  
This spirit made for song,  
Who dwelleth in the young, young oak,  
The old, old oaks among.

Her limbs are molded moonlight ;  
Her breasts are silver moons ;  
She glimmers and she glitters where  
The purple shadow swoons.

And now she knows I love her,  
She says that I have died,  
And laughs and dances in the mist  
That haunts the forestside.

When winds run mad in woodlands  
And mad the black rain sings,  
I see her mad hair blow and blow  
Dark as a raven's wings.

When winds are tamed and tethered,  
And meadows bright as frost,  
I will not walk within the wood  
For fear my soul be lost.

I seek her and she flees me ;  
I follow through the mist—  
The mist ! the mist will freeze me dead  
Ere her shy lips be kissed !

#### IV.

#### OWL ROOST.

The slope is a mass of vines :  
If you walk in the daylight there,

A glimmering twilight shines  
    'Neath vines that are everywhere ;  
Each trunk, that a creeper twines,  
    Lifts strong and brown and fair  
A column ; and all is grave  
As a cathedral nave.

No grass to carpet the feet :  
    And the fox-grape tendrils lace  
So thick that the noonday heat  
    Is chill as a murdered face ;  
And the winds for miles repeat  
    The fugue of a rolling bass :  
The deep leaves twinkle and turn,  
And jets of the sunlight burn.

A white-backed spider weaves  
    Gray webs between the trees—  
Witches who watch their sieves— ;  
    The honey and bumble-bees  
Drop droning among the leaves—  
    Fairies whose masks are these— ;  
At dusk the screech-owls croon—  
Hobgoblins of the moon.

At dark I will not go  
    Under its canopy  
No glittering starbeams know ;  
    No new-moon hanging high,—

Like an Indian warrior's bow,  
With a star that seems to fly  
The arrow of gold it shot :—  
At dark I will not, will not !

At dawn, if my mood be dim,  
And the day be a cloudless one,  
Under its leaf and limb  
I'll walk, though my heart doth shun  
Its shade, and I feel the grim  
Horror of something done  
Here in the years long past,  
That God makes known at last.

## V.

## MOSS AND FERN.

Where bank the brakes of bramble there  
Wrapped with the trailing rose,  
Through canes where waters ramble there,  
And where the wild pink grows—  
Who knows ?  
Beyond the reach of maid or man,  
Here 's Pan.

Where, by the creek, whose pebbles make  
A foothold for the mint  
The gray-blue flags like rebels make

A fallen rebel tint—  
A hint,  
Since from the Old-World woods he ran,  
Of Pan.

Deep in the hollow of the hills  
Ferns deeper than the knees ;  
Long clouds drift down, that love the hills,  
And bring the gradual breeze—  
To please,  
Since Syrinx fled beyond his scan,  
God Pan.

In woods whose beeches break upon  
The peace like some wise word ;  
Where sun-shot shadows shake upon  
Our dream or flits a bird,  
You 've heard  
The flute whose Grecian notes began  
With Pan.

Far in, where mosses lay for us  
Still carpets of green plush ;  
Where bloom and bee and ray for us  
Burn on the budded flush,  
A hush  
May sound the satyr hoof a span  
Of Pan.

In woods whose thrushes sing to us,  
And brooks dance sparkling heels ;  
Whose wild aromas cling to us,  
While woodland worship kneels,—  
Who steals  
Beside us, haunch and face of tan,  
But Pan !

## VI.

## WOODLAND WATERS.

Through leaves of the nodding trees,  
Where creepers swing in the breeze  
Red bag-pipes made for the bees,  
Whose slogan is droning and drawling ;  
Where the columbine scatters its bells,  
And the wild bleeding-heart its shells,  
O'er mosses and rocks of the dells  
The brook of the forest is falling.

You can hear it under the hill  
When the wind in the wood is still,  
And, strokes of a fairy drill,  
Sounds the bill of the yellow-hammer :  
By solomon's-seal it slips,  
Cohosh and the grass that drips—



The laugh of an Undine's lips,  
The sound of its falls that stammer.

I doze in the woods : and the scent  
Of the honeysuckle is blent  
With the spice of a Sultan's tent,  
And my dream with the East's enmeshéd—  
A slave girl sings ; and I hear  
The languor of lute-strings near,  
And a dancing-girl of Cashmere  
In the harem of good Er Reshid.

From ripples of Irak lace  
She flashes the amorous grace  
Of her naked limbs and her face,  
While her golden anklets tinkle :  
Then over mosaicked floors  
Open seraglio doors  
Of cedar : by twos, by fours,—  
Like stars that tremble and twinkle,—

While the dulcimers sing unseen,  
The handmaids come of the queen,  
'Neath silvern lamps, one sheen  
Of jewels of Afrite treasure :  
And I see the Arabia rise  
Of the Nights that were rich and wise,  
Beautiful, dark, in the eyes  
Of Zubeideh, the Queen of Pleasure.



## VII.

## THE THORN-TREE.

The night is sad with silver and the day is glad  
with gold,  
And the woodland silence listens to a legend never  
old,  
Of the Lady of the Fountain, whom the fairy people know,  
With her limbs of samite whiteness and her hair of  
golden glow,  
Whom the boyish south-wind seeks for and the girl-  
ish-stepping rain,  
Whom the sleepy leaves still whisper men shall  
never see again ;  
She whose Vivien charms were mistress of the magic  
Merlin knew,  
That could change the dew to glow-worms and the  
glow-worms into dew.

There 's a thorn-tree in the forest, and the fairies  
know the tree,  
With its branches gnarled and wrinkled as a face  
with sorcery ;  
But the Maytime brings it clusters of a rainy fra-  
grant white,  
Like the bloom-bright brows of beauty or a hand of  
lifted light.

And all day the silence whispers to the sunray of  
the morn  
How the bloom is lovely Vivien and how Merlin is  
the thorn :  
How she won the doting wizard with her naked  
loveliness  
Till he told her demon secrets that but made his  
magic less :

How she charmed him and enchanted in the thorn-  
tree's thorns to lie  
Forever with his passion that should never dim or  
die :  
And with wicked laughter looking on this thing that  
she had done,  
Like a visible aroma lingered sparkling in the sun,  
Just to stoop and kiss the pathos of an elflock of  
his beard,  
In the mockery of parting and mock pity of his  
weird :  
How her magic had forgotten that " who bends to  
give a kiss  
Will but bring the curse upon them of the person  
whose it is " :  
So the silence tells the secret.—And at night the  
fairies see  
How the tossing bloom is Vivien, who is struggling  
to be free,  
In the thorny arms of Merlin, who forever is the tree.

## VIII.

## THE HAMADRYAD.

She stood among the longest ferns  
The valley held ; and in her hand  
One blossom like the light that burns  
Vermilion o'er a sunset land ;  
And round her hair a twisted band  
Of pink-pierced mountain-laurel blooms ;  
And darker than dark dusks that stand  
Below the star-communing glooms,  
Her eyes and hair that shed perfumes.

I saw the silver sandals on  
Her pearl-white feet that seemed too chaste  
To tread true gold : her face like dawn  
On splendid peaks that lord a waste  
Of solitude lost gods have graced ;  
White arms and hands ; firm, faultless hips—  
Bound with the girdling silver, chased  
With acorn cup and crown and tips  
Of oak-leaves—whence the chiton slips.

Limbs that the gods call loveliness !  
The grace and glory of all Greece  
Wrought in one marble shape were less  
Than the perfection that were these,—

I saw her ; and time seemed to cease  
For me—And, lo ! I lived my old  
Greek life again of classic ease,  
Barbarian as the myths that rolled  
Me back into the Age of Gold.

## ONE NIGHT.

## I.

A NIGHT of rain. The wind is out.  
And I had wished it otherwise—  
A wind to sweep the scudding skies  
And burn big stars above the rout ;  
Stars ; and my eyes should meet her eyes ;  
Confront the siren of her sighs ;  
The dimples of her cheeks that pout ;  
Should see her calmness all surmise  
When I have said I love her lies—  
And for that very love she dies.

## II.

What breasts this wind has ! As it runs  
Around each unprotected tree  
Its foggy eyes I seem to see,  
Inhuman, yet a woman's ones ;  
They blaze nor wink, as lionly  
As some bayed beast that will not flee  
The pine knots and derides the guns.  
Or is it but the crime that 's she !  
Who makes such treachery of me,  
Dread substance of my phantasy ?

## III.

And now the boughs and whipping rain  
Confuse them . . . Ah ! her gaze is tense  
As song with lovely influence—  
And it would pain to see her pain . . .  
Yet she must die—with every sense  
Strung to beholding knowledge, whence  
My awful wound be whole again.  
The rain is dark ; the night is dense.  
Not with more silence Innocence  
Appeals to God than my defence.

## IV.

And when she leaves (no one perceives !)  
The old gray manor where the eight  
Old locusts,—gnarly shadows,—freight  
With mossy dreariness its eaves,  
One moment at the iron gate  
She 'll tarry. Then, with breath abate,  
Come rustling through the autumn leaves.  
And I shall take both hands and sate  
My mouth on her's and say, " You 're late " ;  
She 'll laugh to hear I had to wait . . .

## V.

O passion of lost vows, revive  
Imagination, and renew  
The ardor of love's language you

For love's rose-altar kept alive !  
Your priestly oaths that rang with dew  
And starlight ! Think that she is true  
As beautiful.—But thought must thrive  
Here on her falseness, and pursue  
Deed with determined strength to do  
The dastardy she drags me to . . .

## VI.

And we shall walk before the wind ;  
The shuffling leaves about wet feet ;  
Our ruin as the wood's complete  
Because one creature so has sinned  
And has not suffered. She shall meet  
No murder in my eyes ; no heat  
Of fate in holding hand that 's pinned  
To her's. To make her trust to beat,  
I 'll kiss her hair, deep as deep wheat,—  
Like affluent Summer's—saying " Sweet."

## VII.

And should I bungle in this thing,  
This purpose that must leave her dead,  
And cure this fever in my head ?—  
There is no wisdom that may bring  
Soul satisfaction, when is shed  
No redder blood than intent's red :  
The baulked intention still will ring

Fiend noises ; voices that have led  
Desire onward to be fed  
With failure when success seemed said.

## VIII.

When we have reached the precipice  
That mocks the battling of the sea,  
And wallows out black rocks, that knee  
The giant surf and roar and hiss,  
I will not cease to coax and be  
The anxious lover. Trusting she  
Will not suspect my farewell kiss  
Until it turns a curse, and we  
Sway for an instant totteringly,  
And she has shrieked some prayer at me.

## IX.

O let me see no anguish there,  
No pain ! but terror and the frown  
Of crime's appraisal and renown  
Of my life's injury, that bare  
This horror with its bloody crown !—  
No pity, Lord ! For if her gown,  
Suspending looseness of her hair,  
Delay the plunge . . . the night is brown . . .  
My heel must crush her white face down,  
And Hell and Heaven see her drown.



## THE ELIXIR OF LOVE.

“ I HOLD it possible that he  
Who idolizes one that 's dead,  
And dreams of her incessantly  
With visions toil has fed,  
May cease and say, 'T is mine at last  
To live and love the love that 's past ;  
The joy without the grief and pain.  
The dead shall live and love again.' ”

And he had loved her till for him  
His love had grown an ideal part ;  
He saw her standing fair and dim,  
Nor saw her withered heart :  
And labored on ; for, truth to say,  
His pleasure was not in the way  
Of love accomplished, but love's thought  
That justified the time he wrought.

And kept such trysts as phantoms keep,  
Pale distances about his soul ;—  
And moved like one who walks asleep,  
Attaining no sure goal :  
And blither than a lighter heart

At crucible and glass retort  
He labored ; for his love was prism  
To irisate toil's egoism.

He drained wan draughts from out a cup,  
A globe of vague and flaming gold,  
Held from the darkness, brimming up,  
By something white and cold,  
That touched faint lips against its brim,  
Like flakes of foam ; and soft and slim,  
Stooped out of fiery-bound abysses  
To print his brow with icy kisses.

At last within his trembling hand  
An ancient flask burnt starry rose ;  
The starlight of a lonely land,  
Whose mountains no one knows :  
And in the liquid, like a flower,  
A star-like face bloomed for an hour,  
To slowly fade into a skull  
That mocked all that was beautiful.

Though all his life had been so strange,  
Yet stranger than his life was she  
Who led him from his room to range  
'Mid graves and mystery.  
Who led him to her own sad tomb,  
Where he could read within the gloom  
The name of her who lay within  
With all of silence, naught of sin.

Untainted, as it seemed, or made  
By skeleton kisses yet more fair ;  
And thus he found her and so laid  
Her darkness depths of hair  
Upon his shoulder ; and the pearls,  
Around her neck and in her curls,  
Not paler than the kingly calm  
On brows and breasts without a qualm.

And through the night, beneath the moon,  
Across the windy hill, the gloom  
Of forests where the leaves lay strewn,  
He brought her to his room :  
And in the awfulness of death,  
That filled her wide eyes with its breath,  
He set her in a carven chair  
Where the still moon could kiss her hair.

One moment stood as if to think ;  
Then to her lips, grown strangely red,  
His fierce elixir pressed, and " Drink !  
Drink life and love ! " he said.  
And if it drank—he did not know,  
Absorbed upon the brow's wild woe ;  
Or if it rose dispassionate,  
With eyes of stone and lips of hate.

Still as Fall-frozen ice its face ;  
And thin its voice as drizzled rain ;

And, coil on coil, on silk and lace  
Its quiet locks remain.  
Nor breathed its bosom while it spake,  
Like one whose mind is half awake,  
Or lapsing to enchanted sleep  
A century long in some old keep.

And stooping o'er it whispered low—  
A sound as soft as any lyre,  
Or moonbeams beating on the snow  
An unavailing fire :—  
“ What is this life you give ?—Your toil ?  
What is your love ? a thing to soil  
Life with its unfulfilled desire ?—  
There is no demon half so dire ! ”

And where before was quietness,  
Was violence and scorn and evil,  
Yet all the form was passionless,  
A corpse that held a devil. . . .  
And who shall say what hands were its  
That made around his throat these pits,  
That left him strangled ! or the one  
Who placed by him this skeleton !

## THE SPELL.

AND we have met but twice or thrice,—  
Three times enough to make me love !—  
I praised your hair once and your glove,  
Your foot, your gown—you were like ice ;  
And yet this might suffice, my love,  
And yet this might suffice.

Saint John hath told me what to do :  
If I can find the ferns that grow,  
The fernseed that the fairies know,  
To sprinkle fernseed in my shoe,  
And haunt the steps of you, my dear,  
And haunt the steps of you.

You 'd see the poppy-pods dip here,  
The blow-puff of the thistle slip,  
And no wind breathing—but my lip  
Next to your anxious cheek and ear ;  
And you would know me near, my love,  
And you would know me near.

On wood-paths I would tread your gown ;  
You 'd know it was no brier ; then  
I 'd whisper vows of love again,

And see your quick face flush and frown,—  
And then to kiss it down, my dear,  
And then to kiss it down.

You 'd muse at home, or read, or knit,  
And know it was my hands that blotted  
The page, or all your needles knotted,  
And in your anger cry a bit ;  
And I would laugh at it, my love,  
And I would laugh at it.

The secrets you should say in prayer,  
Should I not know ? or, should you sing,  
The one you think of ? or the thing  
That makes you stare at empty air,  
And feel that I am there, my dear,  
And feel that I am there ?

But when the whole sweet truth is said,  
It is my soul that follows you ;  
It needs no fernseed in the shoe,—  
Unless the heart's red love be dead,—  
To win you and to wed, my love,  
To win you and to wed.

## THE RETURN.

A BROWN wing beat the apple leaves and shook  
One blossom on her hair. Then seemed to float  
Deliberate bubbles. In her shaded book  
She found romantic interest. No look  
Betrayed the tumult in her trembling throat.

The bird sang on. A dreamy wind came down  
From one white cloud of afternoon and fanned  
The leaking petals on her book and gown  
And touched her hair : she curved a quiet frown,  
And smoothed it with a single-jewelled hand.

The ribbon of her hair dipped on her brow—  
And then she knew he watched her : 'T was his  
breath  
That moved the blossom on the apple bough ;  
His eyes that made the wood-thrush cease. And  
now  
Her cheek went crimson, now as white as death.

Then on the dappled page his shadow ; yes,  
Not unexpected, yet her haste assumed

Fright's startle ; and rich laughter did confess  
His presence there, like some long-lost caress  
Of noble manhood, where the thick trees bloomed.

Quickly she rose and all her gladness sent  
Sweet welcome to him. Her his unhurt arm  
Drew unresisted ; and the soldier lent  
Fond lips to hers. She wept. And so they went  
Deep in the orchard toward the old brick farm.



## THE LETTER.

LONG shadows towards the east ; and in the west  
A garnet conflagration, wherein rolled  
One cloud like some great gnarly log of gold ;  
Each gabled casement of the farm seemed dressed  
In ghostly roses love made manifest.

And she had brought his letter here to read,  
Upon the porch, that faced the locust glade ;  
To watch the summer twilight burn and fade,  
And breathe the dewy scent of wood and weed,  
Forget all care and her sick soul to feed.

And on his face her fancy mused a while :  
Dark hair, dark eyes—" And now he has a  
beard  
Dark as his hair,"—she smiled ; yet almost  
feared,  
It changed him so, she could not reconcile  
Her heart to that which hid his lips and smile.

Then tried to feature, but could only see  
The beardless man who bent to her and kissed  
Her and their child and left them to enlist.  
She heard his horse grind in the gravel. He  
Waved them adieu and rode to fight with Lee.

And all around her drowsed the hushful hum  
Of evening insects. And his letter spoke  
Youthful caresses to her, nor awoke  
One echo of the bugle or the drum,  
But their whole future in one kiss did sum.

The stars were thick now ; and the western blush  
Drained into darkness. With a dreamy sigh  
She rocked her chair.—It must have been the cry  
Of infancy that made her rise and rush  
To where their child slept, and to hug and hush.

Then she returned. But now her ease was gone.  
She knew not what, she felt some unknown fear  
Press tight'ning at her heart-strings ; and a tear  
Her eyelids scalded ; and her cheeks grew wan  
As helpless sorrow's, and her white lips drawn.

With stony eyes she grieved against the skies,  
A slow, dull, aching agony that knew  
Few tears, and saw no answer shining to  
Her unasked questions from the stars' still eyes :—  
“ Where Peace delays and where her soldier lies ? ”

They could have answered. One was far away  
Beyond the field that belched black batteries  
All the red day : 'mong picket silences,  
On woodland mosses, in a suit of gray,  
Shot through the heart, one by his rifle lay.

## WOUNDED.

[T was in August that they brought her news  
Of his bad wounds ; the leg that he must lose.  
And August passed, and when October raised  
Red rebel standards on the hills that blazed,  
They brought a haggard wreck that did abuse  
The youth whose strength their village had  
amazed.

An ailing spectre of the happy lad,  
The five months husband, whom his country had  
Enlisted, strong for war ; returning this,  
Whose broken countenance she feared to kiss,  
While health's remembrance stood beside him  
sad,  
And wept for that which was no longer his.

They brought him on a litter ; and the day  
Was glad and beautiful. It seemed that May  
In woodland rambles had forgot her path  
Of season, and, disrobing for a bath,  
By the autumnal waters of some bay,  
With her white nakedness had conquered Wrath.

Far otherwise she wished it : wind and rain ;  
The sky, one gray commiserative pain ;

Sleet, and the stormy drift of frantic leaves ;  
Harsh frost and misery, that one perceives  
Has bit the hazel of her hair ; again  
Has carved grave care around her mouth that  
grieves.

Theirs—a mute meeting of the eyes ; she stooped  
And kissed him once : one long dark side-lock  
drooped  
Its braid against the bandage of his breast ;  
With feeble hands he stroked it and caressed,  
Then all his happiness in one look grouped  
Saying, “ Now I am home, I crave but rest.”

Once it was love ! but then the battle killed  
All that sweet nonsense of his youth, and filled  
The heart with sterner madness.—Ah, well ! Peace  
Must blot it out with patience, whose surcease  
Is never hasty.—Yet, as God hath willed !  
With war or peace Who shapes wise ends at ease.

What else for them but, where their mortal lot  
Of weak existence dragged rent ends, to knot  
The frail unravel up !—Love (still afraid  
Days will increase the burthen on it laid),  
Seeks consolation that consoleth not,  
And side by side with Sorrow waits the Shade.

## THE PARTING.

SHE passed the thorn-trees, whose gaunt shadows  
tossed

Their sprawling spiders round her ; and the breeze,  
Beneath the ashen moon, was full of frost,  
And mouthed and mumbled in the sickly trees,  
Like some starved hag who sees her children freeze.

Dry-eyed she waited by their sycamore.  
Lone stars made misty blotches in the sky.  
And all the wretched willows on the shore  
Looked faded as a jaundiced cheek or eye.  
She felt their pity and could only sigh.

His skiff had ground upon the river rocks.  
Whistling he came into the shadow made  
By that dead branch, from which the sea-gull  
mocks  
The flood. And strong his boyish hands were laid  
In hers. And she no weakness had betrayed.

Her speech was quiet while his greeting kiss  
Stung through her hair. She did not dare to lift

The knowledge of her anguished eyes to his,  
When tears smote crystal in her throat. One rift  
Of heartache humored might set all adrift.

Anger and shame were his. She meekly heard.  
And then the oar-locks sounded, and her brain  
Remembered he had said no farewell word ;  
And hard emotion swept her, and again  
Left her as silent as a carven pain. . . .

She, in the old sad farm-house, wearily  
Resumed the drudgery of her common lot,  
Regret remembering. . . . 'Midst old vices he,  
Who would have trod on and somehow did not,  
The wildflower, that had brushed his feet, forgot.

## THE DAUGHTER OF THE SNOW.

THOUGH the panther's footprints show,  
And the wild-cat's, in the snow,  
You will never find a trace  
Of the footsteps of a certain  
Maiden with a paler face  
Than the drifts that fill and curtain  
Hillside, valley, and the wood,  
Where the hunter's wigwam stood  
In the starving solitude.

What white beast hath grown the fur  
For the whiter limbs of her?—  
Raiment of the frost and ice  
To her supple beauty fitting ;  
Wampum strouds as white as rice,  
Mantle, of the frost's weird knitting,  
Wrapping face and hair complete ;  
Fingers gloved with sparkle ; feet  
Moccasined with beaded sleet.

'Though he knew she made a haunt  
Of the dell, it did not daunt :  
Where the hoar-frost carved each tree  
Out of virgin alabaster,

And spun hairy bud and bee  
On each autumn-withered aster ;  
By the frozen waterfall  
He could hear the cold quail call  
O'er the spangled chaparral.

Where the beech-tree and the larch  
Built a shining triumph arch  
For the morning marching down  
Hosts of silver-armored leaders ;  
Where each hemlock had a crown,  
And huge diadems the cedars ;  
Where the long icicle shone,  
There he found her standing lone  
Like a mist-wraith changed to stone.

And she led him many a mile  
With her hand-wave and her smile,  
And the printless swiftness of  
Feet of fog, and frosty flutter  
Of her raiment ; now above  
Now below the boughs of utter  
Winter whiteness. Led him on  
Till the dawn and day were gone,  
And the evening star hung wan. . . .

Hunters found him dead, they tell,  
In the winter-wasted dell,



With his quiver and his bow,  
    Where the cascade runs a rafter  
Made of crystal and of snow ;  
    Where he listened to her laughter,  
Promises, that were as far  
As the secrets of a star,  
Leading on the warrior.

And her countenance is this  
Haunting his ; and this the kiss  
On faint mouth and fainter eyes  
    Of her lip's divine December ;  
This her triumph that defies  
    Love the winter stars remember  
Sought her, met her ; and 't is she  
Clinging to him, neck and knee,  
Where his limbs sank wearily.

## HILDEGARD.

## I.

[T was Hildegard who came  
From the forest of the mountain :  
She whose hair is like the flame  
Of a sunset-fevered fountain :  
You may know her by her eyes,  
Dauntless eyes of bitter beryl,  
Where the anguish never dies,  
And the suffering soul sits sterile  
In such haze as ever lies  
On the unsailed seas of peril.

## II.

It was Hildegard. I knew  
By no sound or sight she trembled  
Near me, lighter than the dew  
In the sessions of assembled  
Flowers. Hers some influence  
Of soft, serpent magnetism,  
Vanquishing my every sense  
With essential mesmerism ;  
Holding me beneath the lens  
Of her will's compelling prism.

## III.

I cannot escape. She treads  
Noiseless as the forest flowers  
Walked on by the wind ; their heads  
Pavements for the mottled hours :  
She is brilliant as the trees  
Where young blossoms are unsheathing ;  
She is lissome as the ease  
Of the woodland water's wreathing ;  
She is subtle as the breeze  
Through the Summer's tresses breathing. .

## IV.

If she sings who is it hears  
But my spirit, that forever  
Her strange singing moves to tears  
And to happy laughter never ?  
Babylonian necromance,  
Oldest witcheries that arrow  
Strains ensorcelling, and glance  
Through the life's bewildered marrow,  
While the soul lies lost in trance,  
Helpless if such heal or harrow.

## V.

She has bound me with her gaze,  
While her white hands weigh my shoulders ;  
And my weak will swings and sways

To her gaze that burns and smolders.  
She has led me far away  
Under boughs where Summer dallies :  
Over peaks of purple day,  
Far away through Eden alleys :  
Though the way be one long May  
It will end in Winter valleys.

## VI.

Brazen earthquake treads the peaks ;  
Iron skies are crusts that sunder,  
Where the lightning's lava leaks  
Vomiting the hosts of thunder.  
Still she kisses me. Dark red  
With my heart's blood are her kisses :  
Then her arms fall cold and dead,  
And my mouth her kisses misses—  
She is gone ; and in her stead  
Flies a milk-white snake that hisses.

## URGANDA.

IT is Sir Elid of the Sword,  
Of whom King Lisuarte hath heard  
These three long years no wished-for word.

His armor dofft, he comes in fur  
And velvet, all the warrior,  
And takes her hand and kisses her.

“Thrice have I heard the Summer sigh  
For drowsy poppies that must die,  
Seen sadder Autumn, fading, lie,”—

So said Helis and said with tears ;—  
“Thrice welcome, Elid, though long years  
Of silence fed my love with fears !”

He said to her : “ My own, my best,  
To thee alone . . . *Witch ! wilt thou*  
*wrest*  
*This hour from me ?* . . . shall be con-  
fessed  
The thing that will not let me rest.

“ It was at Hallowmas I spurred  
Through woods wherein no wild thing  
    stirred,  
No sound of brook, no song of bird.

“ When softly down a tangled way  
A dim fair woman, white as day,  
Rode on a palfry misty gray. .

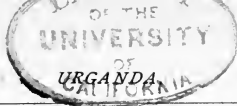
“ Upon her brow a circlet burned  
Of jewels, and the fire inurned  
Changed with her thoughts, and turned and  
    turned.—

“ I stared like him, who, wild and pale,  
Spurs, hag-led, through the night and hail.  
When, lo ! adown a forest vale  
An angel with the Holy Grail !

“ It vanishes ; but, once beheld,  
The longing heart is never quelled,  
Its loveliness hath so enspelled.—

“ She vanished. And I rode alone  
Behind a voice that did intone,  
‘ Urganda is she, the Unknown.

“ ‘ And never shalt thou clasp the form  
Of her who leads thee by a charm  
To follow on through sun and storm.’



“ I can not stay for weal or woe.  
E'en now her magic bids me go,  
Soft-summoning through wind and snow.”. . .

Helis with sweetest songs beguiles  
His hollow face until it smiles,  
And with her lute shapes sweeter wiles :

Till kingly figures, woven in  
The windy arras, seem to win  
Strange, ghostly life, and slay and sin.

Until her deep hair's golden glow  
Sweeps his dark curls as, praying low,  
She kneels a marble-sculptured Woe.

'T were well to leave him here to rest,  
Aweary with his haggard quest,  
All in gray fur and velvet dressed. . . .

At midnight through the vaulted roof  
She heard armed steps of ringing proof ;  
She heard a charger's iron hoof.

The leaded lattice banked one glare  
Of moonlight in the frosty air ;—  
Hag shapes delayed her everywhere.

Sir Elid in the moonlight's beam,  
Stiff, staring as if still a-dream,  
Rode downward to the rushing stream.

In casque and corselet was he dressed,  
And sang like one in goodly jest,  
" I ride upon my love's last quest."

Straight onward by some mighty will  
Into the river that should kill  
He rode and sang, and so was still.

Not wider than its eyes are his  
That stare, where icy eddies kiss  
His lips, where all the horror is.

Strong through the reeds the snow seems  
blown.

What leans above him still as stone,  
And laughs as when the night-winds moan?

If thou shouldst find him, O beware  
Thy kiss ! for where the death 's most fair,  
Helis, Helis, *she* kissed him there !



## THE SON OF EVRAWC.

BEYOND the walls, past wood and twilight field,  
The Usk slipped onward under wharf and wall  
Of old Caerlleon, rolling in, it seemed,  
The heathen blood of all of Arthur's wars.  
So she had left him, and he leaned alone  
Within the carven casement, where a ray  
Of sunset laid a bleeding spear athwart  
The dark oak hall and made the arras drip.  
And now life's bitterness took Peredur  
By all his heart's strings, smiting. He would go,  
Equipped for quest, through all the savagery  
Of mountain and of forest. And this girl—  
Forget her ! and— her game of shuttlecock ;  
This Angharad ; this child the Court had spoiled !  
And he remembered how he once had rode,  
Spurring his piebald stallion down the square  
Upon the King's quest, and a girl had laughed  
From some bedragoned balcony of walls  
That faced the gateway ; and in passing he  
Had glimpsed her beauty ; it was she. Befell  
That snow had fallen and the winter wood  
Lay carpeted with silence. And he rode  
Into a vista where a raven lay  
Slain of a hawk ; some blood-drops dyed the snow :  
He lost himself in quaint comparisons,

Of how the sifted drift was as her skin ;  
The raven's feathers as her heavy hair ;  
And in her cheeks the health of maidenhood  
Red as the blood-drops : so he sat and dreamed :  
When one rode up in angry steel and spoke  
Thrice to no answer, and in anger dashed  
A gauntlet in his face and made at him :  
And how he slew him and rode over him  
Fiercer than fire : how he had returned  
To find her fairer than their Gwenddolen,  
Crowned beauty of the beautiful at Court,  
With Gwenhwyvar, and fair among the fair.

And while he mused he thought he heard her voice :  
Or was it fancy teasing him to hear  
Her lute below the creepered walls, whose leaves  
Bathed with continual sunset all the court,  
Beside the ceaseless whisper of the foam  
Of many fountains. Sweeter mockery  
Had never held him : and he heard her sing :

“ Ask me not now to sing to thee  
Songs I have loved to sing before !  
I love thee not ; it can not be ;  
The dream is done ; the song is o'er.

“ Yet hold my hands ; look deep into  
The heartbreak of my eyes that bore  
Glad welcome erst and now adieu,  
Adieu in eyes thou dost adore.

“ And thou shalt kiss my mouth and brow ;  
Smooth through my hair hands as of yore  
When once 't was love and I and thou  
Forevermore, forevermore.

“ Thou shalt not weep ; I will not weep ;  
I love thee not ; should I regret ?—  
Nay ! let me sing my songs and sleep,  
Sleep and forget, sleep and forget.”

“ O bird of spring,” he said, “ when flowers are  
gone

Thy song will winter underneath the pine :  
God give thou find no winter in thy heart  
Whenas dost find the frost invades thy voice !  
Ah, lovelier than thy song, one sings of thee  
Long ballads in each heartbeat, but in vain :  
Thou dost not heed, thou wilt not hear his songs.  
Or if thou dost 't is very wantonness  
Whose interest apes indifference ; or words,  
A moiety, of mockery ; and this  
To one who 'd love thee over all belief,  
Above all women and against all men.”

She thrummed her lute. He listened and then  
laughed,

“ Love's life ! Our Dagonet might teach me sense,  
The folly that I am !—What ! have I slept  
A sennight in the taking of the moon,

Or danced sleep-footed with the forest fays !  
One would imagine . . . No ! . . . O silken skirts  
Of wantonness ! whose devil's influence  
Parades Caerlleon corridors with lies  
And vanity, coquet the faithless court  
Into a harlot !—Ho ! a page, a page !—  
God's wounds ! my horse, my arms ; I will away ! ”

And many knights he passed, nor saw ; who asked  
What quest he rode. Inscrutable deeds behind  
His visor, and along his sullen spear  
Adventure bitter as a burning ray,  
Into the night he galloped with the stars. . .

And one lone night two years thereafter.—Lost  
Within a forest wilder than wild Dean,  
With neither wind nor water through its leaves,  
That hung as turned to stone above the moss  
And grass, that wrapped the scaly rocks, death-  
dry,  
And barren torrents ; where he had not found  
Or man or hut, or slot of boar or deer  
Through miles and miles of lamentable trees  
And twisted thorns ; beneath the autumn moon,  
Pale as a nun's face seen in cloistered walks,  
Above dead tree-tops, like the rugged rock  
Of melancholy cliffs, he saw wild walls  
Of some vague castle thrust weird battlements  
And hoary towers like a wizard's dream.

Great greedy weeds and burs and briers packed  
Its moat and roadway ; at the very gate  
Weeds deeper than a man ; their ancient stalks  
Devoured with the dust and spider webs,  
Or smothered with the slime where croaked the  
toad.

And Peredur against the portal rode,  
And with his spear-point beat upon its bolts  
A sounding minute. But no wolf-hound barked,  
Only dull echoes of interior walls  
And hollow rock that arched the empty halls.  
And once again his truncheon shook the gate  
And roused a round-eyed owl that screamed and  
blinked,

Like some fierce gargoyle, on the bartizan ;  
And from a crevice, like an omen, hurled  
A frantic bat. And then he heard a grate,  
Concealed within the gloomy battlements,  
Slid slowly, and a lean, gaunt, red-haired youth,  
Lit with a link, addressed him. And he saw  
That famine had sunk hollows in his cheeks,  
And fixed gaunt misery in mouth and eyes.  
This one retired to return again ;  
Undid harsh chains and shot back stubborn  
bolts ;

And stiff with rust the snarling hinges swung.  
And Peredur beheld neglected courts  
Pathetic with dead leaves ; and mournful walls  
Round which huge oaks thrust mistletoe and  
boughs

Of livid leaves, that seemed hooked, headlong  
hands

Of murder, or distorted faces come  
Out of the goblin wood to scoff at him.

And he dismounted. And in clanking mail  
Strode down the hall ; and in the hall beheld  
Youths, lean and auburn-haired around the hearth ;  
Some eighteen of an equal height, and clad  
Alike in dingy garments that looked worn  
And old. And these were like to him who first  
Had bade him welcome. And they greeted him,  
And disarrayed, and bade him to a seat.  
And now an inner door flung wide ; and, lo,  
Five maidens, like five forest flowers, came,  
Dark-eyed, dark-haired. Behold, the queen of  
these

Was Angharad. Clad in a ragged robe  
Of faded satin, that had once been rich.

She looked at Peredur. And he beheld  
The hair again far blacker than the bird  
That flies athwart the milk-white moon ; the  
skin

Inviolably white as wind-flowers blown  
Among the mighty gospels of the trees ;  
And in her cheeks, the rose of maidenhood  
Red as round berries winter bushes spot  
The dimpled drift with under loaded boughs.

She knew him or forgot to ask his name,  
But blushed, and welcomed. And they sat and  
talked

Until the night waxed late. And as they talked  
He marked long fasting in each face, and longed  
To ask but asked not. So the night waxed late.  
And then two nuns came ; sandalled silence in  
Frail footsteps, and pale caution on pale lips.  
One brought a jar of wine, and one brought  
bread,

Six loaves of wheaten flour. And these said,  
“ God bear us witness, Lady, this is all !  
Now is our Convent barren as thy board ; ”  
And so departed. And they sat and ate. . . .

The wind upon the forest and the rain  
Upon the turrets. Had he heard a sigh  
Or was it but the echo of his own,  
Born of great weariness, that broke his rest ?  
A dream, a dream. The elfin storm is on,  
And sows the woods with witchcraft, and the  
leaves

Are chased by imps of darkness through the hail  
And hurling rain ; the wind is wild with leaves.  
Again he slept.

The rain among the trees,  
The wind upon the turrets. Had he moaned  
Now that he lay awake and heard the wind

Hoot on the towers like a green-eyed owl ?  
The rain and wind ; the night is black with rain.

Upon the forest like a voice the wind ;  
And on the turrets, like swift feet, the rain.  
Now was he sure 't was weeping ; and arose  
And found her at his door ; and took her hand,  
That like a soft persuasion lay in his.  
He felt long sobbings shake her and so asked :  
“ Tell me, my sister, wherefore dost thou weep ? ”

And Angharad, “ Yea ; I will tell thee, lord.—  
My name is Angharad. My father held  
An Earldom under Arthur, yea, the first  
In all his Kingdom : and this palace too  
Was his with cantrevs to the west and east.  
When I was but a girl Earl Addanc met  
And loved me. Once, when hunting, he came here  
And sought my father and demanded me.  
He said he loved me, and would have but me  
To grace his bed and board, this Earl. But I—  
I did not love him, being but a child,  
My father's only child, I could not love.  
And so my father said this might not be.  
The Earl was wrath. I heard his furious stride  
Beneath my casement ; double demons pinched  
His evil eyes and twenty gnarled his face.  
He cursed us ere he rode beyond our walls.  
Then I was sent to Camelot and there



Became a woman of young Gwenhwyvar,  
Until my father's death two years ago,  
When I returned, a Countess, to find war  
With Addanc here around beleagured walls.  
So hath he stripped me of my appanage  
Save this one keep, whose strength hath held him  
long,

Brave with my foster brothers : thou hast seen  
The eighteen youths whose valor will not yield.  
But what avails their valor and their will  
Against hard hunger now our larder lacks,  
And lacks the Convent too whereon we leaned !  
And Addanc comes to-morrow morn, the truce  
For our one day's deliberation done.  
If he prevail—the thought is like hot hands  
Here on my brain—his oath is ' that the night  
Shall see me given over to his grooms.' ”

She wept with tremblings. Then said Peredur :  
“ Thou shalt not weep, my sister. And this Earl—  
If he be early call me not too late.  
Fear not. I will not go until my sword  
Hath crossed the sword of so much wickedness,  
And proved this base ambition. Go and sleep.” . . .

A morning gray with mist that gathered drops  
Of drizzle on uncomfortable leaves.  
And now the mist divided : ghostly mail,  
Spears and limp pennons, and the shadowy steeds

Of shadowy knights and chieftains. And it seemed  
A phantom army come to lay dim siege  
To phantom walls whose warriors were ghosts.  
Afar a bugle flourished in the fog,  
Disconsolate, no echo of the wood  
To bear its music burden. To the moat  
Advanced a herald. And within the wall  
The grate was opened, and the gaunt-eyed youth  
Held parley with him, "How the Earl would make  
End of the long dispute to-day, and leave,  
Twixt three a single combat to decide."

So Peredur bade arm him, and prepare  
His horse for battle ; and bade give their Earl  
His answer for the Castle, "That one knight  
Would try the hauberks of the banded three."

And he rode forth : and one rode up and scoffed,—  
A knight in russet armor with loud words,—  
"Small means to large results, forsooth ! Thou  
boast !

A vicious palate hath thy appetite,  
That feasted long with hunger and must now  
Conclude the banquet with three deaths !—Sir  
Death,

Here is thy death !" and hacked at Peredur  
A weighty stroke that gashed his chain camail.  
But, rising in stiff stirrups, ere he passed  
Two-handed swung the sword of Peredur,

And helm and head of him who fell were twain,  
Split like an apple. And the walls were glad.

Then came another clad in silver mail  
As he were Galahad, and in the mist  
Glimmered like moonlight. And with levelled  
spear  
Demanded : " Whence and what art thou ? This  
stroke

Was never fathered by long fasting."—Then  
Quoth Peredur, " I am of Arthur's Court."—  
" A goodly service truly that of his !  
Know, all his knights that I have met have died."—  
Quoth Peredur : " Thy falsehood choke thee dead !  
Between thy teeth, liar, I nail thy lie !"  
And at his gorget hurled his ponderous spear  
Ere that one met him spurring at full speed  
Disdainful. And the desperate stroke of him  
Who had worked wonders with the Table Round,  
Glanced shattering from the sloping shield, while he,  
Bent o'er his stallion's crupper, rolled ; his tongue  
Cleft at the root. And all the walls were glad.

Now came a third : a black knight and a black  
Enormous steed. No words he wasted. But,  
The fierce spears splintered, from the baldrics  
burned  
Swift blades ; and Battle held his breath awhile  
To watch the great shields rock beneath great blows,

Oppose, deploy, as hilt to hilt they hewed  
At heaume and gorget. And the battle bright  
Upon the splintered greaves from many wounds.  
Then Peredur, his whole strength wrenching at  
Unyielding effort of his foeman's shield,  
Beat down his guard and smote—And Addanc lay  
Beneath the son of Evrawc whose swift hands  
Razed off his casque and laid a blind blade bare  
Across hot eyes, and set a heel of steel  
Upon his throat and said : “ Thou coward curse !  
What woman wilt thou war with now ?—’T is well  
Thy features are thus evil and might breed  
Nightmares among the scullions, or thou  
Hadst been one span the shorter !—Villainy,  
Out of thy ugly head speak ! ” . . . Cursing he,  
A stricken bulk, growled, “ Let me live ” ; and so  
The sword slid from fierce eyes and from his neck  
The heel. And he arose to make in full  
Due restitution of her lands to her  
He had harassed and robbed. And so in time  
This was fulfilled.

But Peredur remained,—  
For, to be near her and to do for her  
Was almost happiness,—until the land  
Acknowledged her with all obedience.—  
Her rights established, what more now remained  
To lend excuse unto his long delay?—  
And so he went to her and sought her from

Among her maidens, and bespoke her how  
“He would ride hence and would but say farewell.”

“Dost thou then so desire?” she. And he  
Ground iron strides along the lofty hall  
And so returned with iron strides and said :  
“Ay, by my God ! Who knows I have not fought  
For thee but still against thee. ’T is my curse.  
I came not here to woo. Thou wouldst but  
laugh.—

Haply thou hast forgotten—yea, thou hast—  
A son of Evrawc, Evrawc of the North,  
Who loved thee once . . . hast memory of him  
yet? . . .

Look in his eyes once more and say farewell.”

“This shall not be, my soul.” He heard her low  
Voice pleading softly, and new life leapt up :  
He heard her as men hear the voice of hope  
Upon despair’s black brink, and see one star  
Bloom, like a lily with a heart of fire  
Throbbing within it, slowly out of night.  
And each word was as welcome as a rose  
Dropped from the rosy lips of laughing Spring :  
“I have remembered ; think’st thou I have not ?—  
O son of Evrawc, thou who couldst not read,  
’Neath bells of folly and a merry mask,  
A girl’s dear secret through her tinsel acts.—

Or, was not thine but fancy?—Ah, too true,  
I heard the vapid ending of a tale  
Coquetry had begun for different end.—  
But, if thou wilt, we can read on ; mayhap  
It ends in wedlock.—Both were wrong. The one :  
Because his love was blind, impetuous,  
Nor saw the love that would have proved 't was  
love,  
Not lust, before surrender. Th' other : that  
She sought for wisdom in the frivolous,  
And so made falsehood of her heart's high truth,  
Deceived more than deceiving.—Wilt thou go ? ”

He had no rhetoric to make reply ;  
Only his arms around her, and his eyes  
Upon her eyes, and kisses on her mouth.  
Long time they stood.—Outside the sunset flung  
Barbaric glory on the autumn wood.—  
And lifting up her face he said to her :—  
“ Thou hast thy lute ? Come, let me sing to thee.  
Then shalt thou sing thy song, and if it please  
No better than two years ago, why, love,  
We will—ride forth together to the Queen :  
And Gwenhwyvar shall kiss thee and confess  
Thou art her fairest flower of loveliness,  
And give thee to me who will wear thee here.”

## TORQUEMADA.

WHAT doth the Archbishop, his chapter, of  
Toledo? Do they doze and yawn above  
Some dull dry bull Pope Sextus sent to rot?  
I cry, Awake! O prelates militant!  
Spain's king is less than king as I am less  
Than Paul! — (And what a distance!) — Look  
around;  
Observe and dare! — I write above my seal,  
A grave Dominican, to postulate  
Pacheco, Marquis de Villena, croaks  
Wise truth into your excellencies' ears:  
King Henry's heir *is* illegitimate!  
Blanche of Navarre cast off, his Impotence  
Gave us a wanton out of Portugal  
For queen; Joanna, who bore him this heir  
The cuckold king parades, a bastard, now.  
Look! all the Court laughs—secretly; but masks  
Are but for slaves; the people's smile is free  
Of all concealment; and the word still wags  
About this son, who is his favorite's,  
Bertrand la Cueva's; whom the king himself  
Made warm familiar with Joanna's bed.  
Sweet infamy! Absolve one—at the stake!

Confess the other—with the axe that hews  
The neck of state asunder ! Is it well,  
Prelates and ministers ?

Be merciful !—

Lest the disease of this delicious fruit,  
Our Kingdom of Castile, corrode the core,  
Why not pare off all rottenness and leave  
The healthy pulp ! The throne, the populace,  
The Church, and God demand the overthrow,  
Deponement or the abnegation of  
This Henry, named the Fourth, the impotent !—  
Alphonso lives. (It is my guarded hope  
That brothers of such kings have no long life.)—  
Am I impatient ? 't is the tonsure helps.  
My native town, Valladolid, did sow  
The priestly germ, ambition : there it had  
Poor soil indeed, and blew to Cordova,  
And sunned its torpor in a woman's smile,  
And grew a tenderness too insecure  
When frosts were out. Required hardiness,  
And found it there at Zaragossa ; (where  
Fat father Lopés, bluff Dominican,  
My youth confuted with wise nonsense, and  
Astonished Spain with disputation in  
The public controversies of the monks.)  
Transplanted to the Court, O splendid speed !  
Sure hath its growth been. Now a Cardinal's  
red  
Is promised by the bud that tops its stem.



My Isabella, daughter and dear child ;  
The incarnation of my dear ideal ;  
Pure crucifix of my religious love ;  
Sweet cross which my ambition guards and holds ;  
How have I through the saintly medium  
Of the confessional impressed thy ear !  
Ploughed up the early meadows of thy soul  
For fruitful increase ! In thy maiden heart  
Insinuated subtleties of seed  
Shall ripen to a queen crowned with a crown  
From welded gold of Arragon and Castile !  
How I this son of John, the Second named,  
Prince Ferdinand of swarthy Arragon,—  
(Grant absolution, holy mother mine !  
Thus thy advancement and thy mastery  
Would I obtain !)—have on her fancy limned  
In morning colors of proud chivalry !  
Till he a sceptred paladin of love  
And beaming manhood stands ! She dreams, she  
dreams  
What—Heaven knows ! 'T is, haply, of a star  
She saw when but a babe and in the arms  
Of some sad nurse. A star that laughed above  
A space of Moorish balcony that hung  
Above a water full of upset stars,  
Reflected glimmers of old palace fêtes ;  
A star she reached for, cried for, claimed and  
claimed  
But never got ; that blew young promises,  
Court promises, centupled from the tips

Of golden fingers at her infant eyes.—  
Well ! when this girl is grown to be a queen  
What if one, Torquemada, clothe her star  
In palpable approach and give it her !—

When she is queen, three steadfast purposes  
Have grown their causes to divine results.  
No young imagination did I train  
With such endeavor and for no reward.—  
How oft I told her of the gifts of kings  
And queens, while pensively she sat and heard  
Absorbed upon my face ! her missal, crushed  
'Neath one propped elbow, its bent careless leaves  
Rich with illuminated capitals  
Of gold and purple, open on her lap.  
Felicity discoursed of who adhere  
To God's true Vicar and our Holy Church :  
Beatitude and all the ceaseless bliss,  
Celestial, of eternal Paradise,  
As everlasting as the hearts that have  
Protected Heaven and its only Faith :—  
“ Walk not on ways that lead but to despair,  
The easy ways of Satan ; rather thorns  
For naked feet that will not falter if .  
Retentive of the arm of our true Church,  
Who urges weariness with comfortings  
Low whispered in the tuneless ear of Care.”—  
“ Do some digress ? ”—“ Oh, many, many, yea !  
And there 's necessity ! we should annul,  
Pluck out the canker that contaminates,

Destroys the milk-white beauty of our rose.  
God's persecution ! they confront our faith  
With brows of stigmatizing error writ  
In Hell's red handwriting. Shall such persist ?  
No ! Heaven demands an end to all this shame !"—  
Her pledge she gave me then : " When queen, for  
Spain  
The Inquisition ! Let the saints record !  
A mattock of deracination to  
Extirpate Heresy."—And I ?—Oh, I  
But Torquemada a Dominican ! . . .

Blind Spain hastes blindly onward, happy for  
Her hellward plunge. Our need is absolute.  
Conclusion to these monster heresies  
Or their most imminent consequence ! The throne,  
Which is derived directly from high God,  
Meseems should champion God in any cause ;  
And if it will not, we will teach it to.—  
O Spain, Spain, Spain ! awake ! start up and crush  
These multiplying madnesses that mouth  
Their paradoxes at the Cross and shriek  
Black blasphemies e'en in the face of Christ !—  
O miserable Religion, is thy pride  
So fallen here ! thy tenement of strength  
So powerless ! Then where 's security,  
When steadfast principle is insecure,  
And God's own pillars rock and none resists ?—  
But I have tempered, at a certain heat,  
A heart of womanhood ; and have so wrought

The metal of a mind within the forge  
Of holy discourse, that Toledo's steel  
Springs not so true as my reforming sword,  
Which carves out worship to a perfect whole.—  
Imperial Isabella ! patroness !  
Protectress of pure faith ! sweet Catholic !  
Our Church's dear concern ! its bell ! its book !  
Tribunal and its godly Act of Faith ! . . .

This need is first : to make her sceptred queen  
Of wide Castile. To make, (the second need),  
Him, whom Ximenes, my friend Cordelier  
Shall serve as minister, King Ferdinand,  
Her wedded consort. And the third great need,  
The last,—which still is first,—to scour from Spain  
These Moors, who make a brimstone-odious lair  
Of that rich region of Granada, which  
Like some vile sore of scaly leprosy  
Scabs Spain's fair face.

Delay not. Let the Church  
Divide attention then 'twixt heretics  
And unclean Jews. So wash her garments clean !—  
King Henry falls. God and St. Dominick  
Aid my endeavor ! and the Holy See  
Build firm foundations !—Let the corner-stone  
Of our most holy Inquisition here  
Be mortared with the blood of heretics  
That its strong structure may endure !—(And I ?—  
Made Grand Inquisitor and Cardinal !)

## AN EPISODE.

## I.

SAINT DOMINICK, Pope Innocent,  
Thou holy host, Lyons once bent  
On Languedoc, may God the Father  
Plunge you in everlasting Hell !  
And may the blood of those who fell  
At Béziers together gather  
In torrents of eternal pain,  
And on your souls beat boiling rain !

## II.

And Mountfort !—It was given me,  
For I had prayed incessantly,  
To be the David to this giant.—  
An Albigenian warrior  
My husband was. He, in the war,  
The Pope had thundered on defiant  
Thoulouse and outlawed Languedoc,  
Stood with Earl Raymond like a rock.

## III.

The walls of Béziers cried loud  
And Carcassonne's, red in their cloud

Of blood, disease, and conflagration,  
For vengeance !—When he left me here,  
With my two babes, I felt no fear.

The crusade's excommunication  
Poured down its holy Catholics  
To crush and burn us heretics.

## IV.

At Carcassonne he fell. And there  
My babes died famished. And despair  
And torture mine within their prison !  
Till Mother of our God portrayed  
This Mountfort's death. On me were laid  
Blessed hands of power in a vision.  
The saints' own cause could I refuse,  
That led me to besieged Thoulouse ?

## V.

No arrow mine, no arbalist ;  
A sling, a stone, a woman's wrist  
God and his virgin Mother aided.—  
Their engines rocked our walls. I felt  
The time had come and, praying, knelt ;  
Then from the sling my hair had braided  
Launched at De Mountfort's bassinet  
The rock where eyebrow eyebrow met.

## VI.

Not mine his death. Of Carcassonne  
Our Lady's hand had aimed the stone,  
That slew this monster that was master !—  
Saint Dominick and Innocent,  
A woman was the instrument,  
Our Holy Lady's the disaster !  
Two armies saw her whirl the sling,  
And afterward—no human thing.

## THE MAMELUKE.

## I.

SHE was a queen. 'Midst mutes and slaves,  
A mameluke, I loved her.—Waves  
Dashed not more hopelessly the paves  
Of her high marble palace-stair  
Than lashed my love my heart's despair.—  
As souls in Hell dream Paradise,  
I suffered, yet forgot me there  
Beneath Rommaneh's houri eyes.

## II.

A slave who ate his own mad heart  
And served her beauty, but might dart  
No amorous glance at any part.—  
I found her on a low divan,—  
Taïfi leather's perfumed tan,—  
Beneath her, cushions stuffed with down ;  
A slave-girl with an ostrich fan  
Sat by her in a golden gown.

## III.

“O boy, thy lute !”—Fair lutanist,  
She loved my voice.—Beside her wrist,



Hooed with a blaze of amethyst,  
Her balass-ruby-crusted lute :  
Gold-welted stuff, like some rich fruit,  
Her raiment, diamond-showered, rolled  
Folds pigeon-purple, whence one foot  
Drooped in an anklet-twist of gold.

## IV.

I sat and sang with all the fire  
That boiled within my blood's desire,  
That made me more than slave and higher :  
And at the end my passion durst  
Quench with one burning kiss its thirst. —  
O eunuchs ! had her face a scorn  
When through this heart your daggers burst ?  
And dare ye say I died forlorn ?

## THE SLAVE.

HE waited till within her tower  
Her taper signalled him the hour.

He was a prince both fair and brave.  
What hope for him to love *her* slave !

He of the Persian dynasty ;  
And she the Queen of Araby !—

No Peri singing to a star  
Upon the sea were lovelier.

I helped her drop the silken rope.  
He clomb aflame with love and hope.

I drew the dagger from my gown  
And cut the ladder, leaning down.

Oh, wild the face, and wild the fall ;  
Her cry was wilder than them all.

I heard her cry, I heard him groan,  
And stood as merciless as stone.

The eunuchs came ; fierce scimitars  
Stirred in the torch-lit corridors.

She spoke like one who prays in sleep,  
And bade me strike or she would leap.

I bade her leap, the time was short ;  
And kept the dagger for my heart.

She leapt. I put their blades aside  
And smiling in their faces—died.

## THE SEVEN DEVILS OF MAHOMET.

THERE is a legend, lost in some old dusty  
Tome of the East, — and who shall ques-  
tion it?—

Concluding ancient wisdom, rather musty,  
Wherein much war and wickedness and wit  
Insult and wrath and love and shame are writ.  
Wherein is written that, when Mahomet  
Fled out of Mecca from the people's wrath,  
He met a shadow standing in his path,  
A naked horror blacker than hewn jet.

It in one hand held out a flaming jewel,  
Wherein fierce colors burnt and blent like eyes  
Of seven fires as a single fuel :  
The horror said, "God cursed them for their  
lies.

These are the seven devils of the wise  
And I am Satan !" And the Prophet saw  
The purposes of Allah, and replied,  
"God, set them free ! And what shall be denied  
To these except life's hope ?" His word was law.

Since then the seven devils have descended  
From nation unto nation past the ken

Of Mahomet, who left us undefended  
Of any amulet of sword or pen  
'Gainst demons boring at the brains of men :  
So many maggots that will spend their spite  
In sadness, fear and scorn, despair and rage,  
Envy and jealousy, on fool and sage,  
The seven devils with us day and night.

## JOHN DAVIS, BOUCANIER.

HIGH time, high time, good gentlemen, to sail  
the Spanish Main !

Three months we've watched for galleons and treasure  
bound for Spain ;

Three months ! and not a vessel, neither barque nor  
brigantine !

No Cartagena plate-ship or De Dios have we  
seen !

Our sails sleep idle as the wind, our ships as gulls  
or waves ;

And shall inaction rot us like a gang of shackled  
slaves !

Up, Boucaniers ! the land is wide and wider far the  
sea—

Somewhere between the dusk and dawn and dusk  
some hope must be ;

Some ship somewhere or city there beneath the  
Indian sky,

What matter whether east or west or if men live or  
die,

Or fight or yield on ship or field !—The main for  
me and mine !—

To cram our ports against their ports and see the  
battle-line



Pour on their decks with naked necks the dirks be-  
tween our teeth ;  
And sail or sink our flag is there, we Boucaniers  
beneath !

And what availed your patron saints, Iago or Saint  
Marc,  
Lanceros, Adelantados, against Ravenau's barque !  
O butchers of good Jean Ribault, well might your  
cheeks turn pale  
When Montebaro's brigantine shook to the breeze  
her sail !  
Around the coasts where New Spain boasts the  
haughtiness of Old,  
Her tyranny and bigotry and sordid greed for gold,  
From east to west and north to south among the  
Carib Isles,  
Swift as revenge the Frenchman swept across the  
foaming miles.  
The spirit of Pierre-le-Grand and of his gallant  
crew,  
Who took a galleon with a boat, be with me and  
with you !

Prime arquebus and sharpen blade, and let the guns  
look brave  
As burnish of the sunlight's beam upon the sun-lit  
wave !

And all be glad as when we had Granada in our  
hold,  
And stabbed the city's sentinels and took the city's  
gold :  
New Spain's good homes and churches, aye, will  
not forget too soon  
The Boucanier, John Davis, he who taught their  
Dons a tune,  
Dutch serenades to frighten maids beneath the  
yellow moon.  
What helped the Latin of their monks to curse  
what Satan blessed !  
Bright pieces, broad, -of-eight and plate we counted  
in our chest.  
And now that we may double or may treble every  
piece,  
Pipe up the anchor, boatswain ! and before the  
hawser cease,  
Let every sail salute the gale and every rope be  
taunt,  
The Devil take all care and—us, if jaundiced colors  
daunt !

The sea-gulls dip and dive and float, and swim and  
soar again,  
Be merry, merry gentlemen, and drink " the Ships  
of Spain ! "  
High-hearted as the sea-gulls soar, and as the case  
may go,



---

A round Dutch oath for wealth and health and—to  
Spain's overthrow.

Doff caps and follow ; though the prize be overfat  
or lean,

Kneel down and give her thanks who leads, Dame  
Fortune who is queen !

Upon our prow she guides us now against San  
Augustine.

## THAMUS.

AND it is said that Thamus sailed  
Off islands of Ægean seas  
No seamen yet had ever hailed,  
No merchant yet had sailed to these,  
Phœnician or the Chersonese.

And lying all becalmed, 't is told,  
How wonderful with peace that night  
Rolled out of dusk and dreamy gold  
One star, whose splendor seemed to write  
Laws that were mightier than might.

Like shadows on a shadow-ship  
The dark-haired, dark-eyed sailors lay,  
When from the island seemed to slip,  
Borne overhead and far away,  
A voice that "Thamus!" seemed to say.

Then silence ; and the languid Greek,  
The lounging Cretan, watched the sky,  
Or in carousal ceased to speak  
And sing. Again came rolling by  
The voice, and "Thamus!" in its cry.

All were awake : tall, swarthy men  
With bated breath stood listening,  
Or gravely scanned the shore. And then,  
Although they saw no living thing,  
Again they heard the summons ring.

And "Thamus !" sounded shore and sea ;  
And at the third call leaned the Greek  
Full facing toward the isle ; and he  
Cried to the voice and bade it speak  
The mission, message it would seek.

"Thou shalt sail on to such a place  
Among the pagan seas," it said,  
"To such a land ; and thou shalt face  
Against it when the east is red,  
And cry aloud 'Great Pan is dead !' " . . .

As fearful of unholy word  
Their souls stood stricken with strange fear. . . .  
Then Thamus said, "Yea, I have heard.  
Yet 't is my purpose still to steer  
Straight on. That land shall never hear !"

And so they sailed that night ; and came  
Into an unknown sea ; and there  
The east burnt like a sword of flame  
A Cyclops forges ; straight the air  
Lay sick with calm ; the morn was fair.

Then double dread was theirs ; and dread  
Was Thamus' ; and he raised his hand  
And shouted, " Pan ! great Pan is dead !"  
And all the twilight-haunted land  
Cried, " Pan is dead !" from peak to strand.

They saw pale shrines and temples nod  
Among the shaken trees ; and pale  
Wild forms of goddess and of god  
Crawl forth with crumbling limbs and trail  
Woe, till the dim land grew one wail.—

What tripods groaned ?—Serapis first  
Within Canopus' temples heard  
The word, and his brute granite burst  
A monster bulk. Dodona stirred  
And bowed huge oaks before the word,

That left them thunder-riven. Fell  
On Aphaca where, marble-hewn,  
The marble Venus had a well  
That burnt white fire like a moon—  
And, lo ! her loveliness lay strewn.

Then o'er Cilicia passed, and bent  
Sarpedon's oracle with scorn,  
Apollo—Yea ! the god lay rent,  
And Delphos dumb. And, lo ! the morn  
O'er Bethlehem where Christ lay born.

## ADVENTURERS.

SEEMINGLY over the hill-tops,  
Possibly under the hills,  
A tireless wing that never drops,  
And a song that never stills.

Epics heard on the star's lips ?  
Lyrics read in the dew ?—  
To be the song at our finger tips,  
And live the world anew !

Cavaliers of the Cortés kind,  
Bold and stern and strong,—  
And, oh, for a fine and muscular mind  
To sing a new world's song !

Sailing seas of the silver morn,  
Winds of the balm and spice,  
To put the old-world art to scorn  
At the price of any price !

Danger, death, but the hope high !  
God's, if the purpose fail !  
Into the deeds of a vaster sky  
Sailing a dauntless sail.

## VOYAGERS.

WHO will tell me where the pale  
    Blossoms of our childhood blow?—  
Levels under hills that trail  
    Morning summits in the glow,  
Crimson, o'er a crimson sail?

Whence our manhood entered on  
    The unknowable, unseen;  
Cavaliers who still have gone  
    Sailing a frail brigantine  
On from voyaging dawn to dawn.

Leons seeking lands of song,  
    Fabled fountains spouting spray  
Where their anchors drop among  
    Corals of some blooming bay,  
And the swarthy natives throng.

“Shoulder axe and arquebuse!”—  
    Rolls the region past yon range  
Of sierras, vaporous,  
    Rich with gold and wild and strange,  
Still evading them and us.

---

Who may find it ?—Though your zeal  
Darien summits doth subdue,  
Your Balboa eyes reveal  
But a vaster sea come to ;  
New endeavor for your keel.

Yet !—who sails with face set hard  
Westward, while reward still flies  
Eastward, where the starbeams sward  
Meadows of the graveless skies,  
He may find it—afterward.

## AMERICA.

THESE are the days when Strength sits wisdom-  
lipped,  
With eagle thoughts that soar above the storm  
Convulsing ledges of the rocks of Wrong.  
O Liberty, thy tongue is thunder-tipped ;  
Thy words are senates that can slay or charm ;  
Thy voice is battle in a freedom song.

America, what hates may touch thy hands !  
Disdains insult thy majesty of brow !  
Oppressions brave the mercy of thine eyes !—  
Behind thee dies the darkness from the lands !  
Before thee mounts the glory of the Now !  
Around thee sit the sessions of the skies !

These are the days when Progress leans to heed  
The lessons of the heavens and of God,  
The golden texts of morning and of night :  
The science of the suns hath taught her speed !  
No precedent of kingdoms makes her nod !  
Brow-bound with bolts, her feet are shod with  
light !



America, beneath thy awful heel

What iron tyrannies, that crushed the poor,

Writhe scorpion lengths abolished with their  
ire !—

Around thine arms, that are not wrapped in steel,

What old-world injuries have failed to moor

Barques thou hast beacon'd like a pillar'd fire !

Dark Monarchies, the darker days divide,

And swords of Superstition and of Lust

Fall shattered from the necks of Truth and  
Mind.—

One onward principle, achieving pride ;

One starward purpose over empires' dust

Strewn with the fetters that no more shall bind.

Humanity, thy human gyves are rent ;

The Christian actual looks up again

Through God-progressions of eternity :

Behold ! the pagan, Violence, is spent !

His idol, Ignorance, lies burst in twain

Before the splendor of the Christ to be !

## THE OCKLAWAHA.

RIVER, winding from the west,  
Winding to the River May,  
Often hath the Indian pressed  
Through your black-gums and your mosses,  
Where the alligator crosses  
Still some lily-paven bay,  
Basking there in lazy rest.

Still the spider-lily loops  
Sprawling flowers, peels of pearl,  
Where the green magnolia stoops  
Buds to yellow-lily bonnets;  
Where, the morning dew upon its  
Golden funnels, curl on curl  
The festooning jasmine droops.

Who may paint the beauty of  
Orchids blooming late in June,  
Bristling on the boughs above !  
Cypress-trees where many a flower  
Long lianas' tendrils shower  
On the deer that come at noon  
Muzzles in cool depths to shove.

Lilied inlets where the teal  
Dabble 'mid the water-grasses,  
That some treasure seem to seal  
With white blooms that star the river :  
Bays the swift kingfishers shiver  
Into circles as each passes  
O'er their mirrors that reveal.

Bends, reflecting root and moss,  
Where the tall palmettoes throng,  
Over live-oaks tower and toss  
Panther necks whose heads are heavy :  
Hamaks where the perfumes levy  
Tribute from the birds in song,  
From the mocking-birds that cross.

Logs the turtles haunt ; and deeps  
Of lagoons the searching crane  
Wades ; and where the heron sleeps ;  
Where the screaming limpkins listen,  
And the leaping mullet glisten ;  
Bream and bass dart by again,  
And the dark didapper sweeps.

Coäcoochee, Coäcoochee,  
Still the huge magnolias bloom  
And the tangled Cherokee,  
Where the blazing-star spreads splendor

Through the forest, and the tender  
Discs of the hibiscus loom,  
Trailing over bush and tree.

Osceola, Osceola,  
Phantoms of your vanquished race  
From the starlight seem to draw  
Stern invasion. Mossy regions  
Swarm the Seminole's lost legions,  
Threatening war-paint on each face.—  
Dead, long dead for Florida !

## THE MINORCAN.

## I.

THE mocking-bird may sing  
Loud welcomes in the spring ;  
The farewell of our nightingales  
Prevails, prevails !  
No grief may hush their song :  
In sleep they sing the clearer—  
It's "home, home, home," the whole night  
long—  
What wonder that we feel our wrong  
The nearer !

## II.

Hibiscus blooms surprise  
The swamp with rosy eyes ;  
The Balearic girl but knows  
Our rose, our rose !  
No slavery may undo  
Her dream it makes the purer,  
With "love, love, love," the long night  
through,—  
To make the day's long heartbreak too  
The surer.

## III.

The wind from out the west  
Would teach our souls unrest ;  
We will not hear until hath ceased  
    The East, the East !  
No sorrow wakes to weep  
But th' olive's whisper hushes ;  
It 's " rest, rest, rest," while night doth  
    keep  
The weight of memory asleep  
    That crushes.

## IV.

Deep ocean brings us shells ;—  
Adieus and dead farewells,  
Surf-couriers of its swiftest foam  
    From home, from home !  
But when the stars are high,  
Its slumberous voices cherish  
The heart with " hope," that will deny  
Despair until we wake to sigh  
    Or perish.

## THE SPRING IN FLORIDA.

C RAB-APPLES make the western belt  
Of hamak one gay holiday of pink,  
And through palmetto depths, on breaths like felt,  
The jasmine odors sink.

There blows a blur of peach and pearl  
Around the villa by the river's side ;  
The guava blossoms and the orange-trees whirl  
Aroma far and wide.

“ He courts her ! ” sings the mocking-bird,  
“ He courts her, and she misses  
This word or that she might have heard,  
Had he not drawn a sweeter word  
From her sweet lips with kisses.  
He courts her ! ”

Chameleons bask bright bodies there,  
Where lemons powder stars above the way ;  
The fragrance holds its heart out and the air  
Embalms it in a ray.

Strange lilies laugh mute mouths of musk  
And stun the zephyr, where the loaded light

Shines with japonicas. And tusk on tusk  
Magnolias bud in sight.

The red-bird's song is, "Haste, haste, haste !  
Nor wait till morn to marry—  
Mayhap you 'll find hath gone to waste  
The poppy that the stalk once graced :  
The moments may not tarry,  
So marry !"

There the verandah, spilled and spun  
With deep bignonia, bulging one full frame  
Of scarlet foam, seems pouring for the sun  
A cataract of flame.

The oleander hedges soak  
The dusk with sweetness ; and the gray moss  
heaps  
Ghost raiment round the aloe and live-oak  
Where the bronze fountain leaps.

"Oh, love, love, love !" the wood-dove coos,  
"Oh, love, love, love forever !  
They, who the crimson rose refuse,  
The lily's whiteness too may lose—  
So choose thou now or never !  
Oh, love, love, love !"



## STRATEGY.

AND is it madness still to hope  
For ways made blue with vetchlings' eyes,  
Beyond the creek-road and the slope  
Far as the gray hawk flies?

A bird may beat a crippled wing  
To lure me from its brush-built nest ;  
A sudden throat may sit and sing  
Its wildwood happiest.

Beyond the orchard hills be hills  
Of knee-deep huckleberries, green  
With little bell-blooms, summer fills  
To plumpness of the bean.

O season of the sassafras !  
O animal, the rathe months hold,  
Kick happy heels in deeps of grass  
And roll in deeper gold !

Confusing strategy ! for frost  
With ice seams every flower-bed !  
Where once each stalk an Edgar tossed,  
Tom shakes a shivering head.

Where once the gladiola shook  
A wand of folly in the sun,  
That humped stock hath a grizzly look—  
The poor, pale Fool is done.

A sorry beard my rose-bush hath,  
An old king's, where the sleet 's a tear  
For this dead lily in my path—  
Cordelia and Lear.

## THE WHIPPOORWILL.

## I.

ABOVE long woodland ways that led  
To dells the stealthy twilights tread  
The west was hot geranium-red ;  
And still, and still,  
Along old lanes, the locusts sow  
With clustered pearls the Maytimes know,  
Out of the crimson afterglow,  
We heard the homeward cattle low,  
And then the far-off, far-off woe  
Of "whippoorwill !" of "whippoorwill !"

## II.

Beneath the idle beechen boughs  
We heard the cow-bells of the cows  
Come slowly jangling towards the house ;  
And still, and still,  
Beyond the light that would not die  
Out of the scarlet-haunted sky,  
Beyond the evening-star's white eye  
Of glittering chalcedony,  
Drained out of dusk the plaintive cry  
Of "whippoorwill !" of "whippoorwill !"

## III.

What is there in the moon, that swims  
A naked bosom o'er the limbs,  
That all the wood with magic dims ?  
    While still, while still,  
Among the trees whose shadows grope  
'Mid ferns and flow'rs the dew-drops ope,—  
Lost in faint deeps of heliotrope  
Above the clover-sweetened slope,—  
Retreats, despairing past all hope,  
    The whippoorwill, the whippoorwill.

## SATAN.

STILL shall I stand the everlasting hate  
Colossal Chaos builded 'neath thine eyes,  
The symbol of all evil, that defies  
Thy victory, and vanquished still can wait.  
Scar me again with such vast force as late  
Hurled abrupt thunder and archangel cries  
'Mid fiery whirlwinds of the terrible skies  
Down the deep's roar against Hell's monster gate !  
Thy wrath cannot abolish or make less  
Me, an eternal wile opposed to wrath :  
No purpose shalt thou have and I no plan !  
Behold thy Eden's vanished loveliness !  
Why hast thou set a sword within its path,  
And cursed and exiled thine own image, Man ?

## SIC VOS NON VOBIS.

**I**F on the thorns thy feet be bruised to-morrow,  
And far the fierce sands glare,  
Unbind thy temples ! thank life for its sorrow,  
Its longing and despair !

With love within, what heart shall fail and wither,  
Athirst for rivered hills?  
Moaning, “ Mine ! mine ! what hate hath led me  
hither  
Unto a sky that kills ! ”

Unworthy thou ! if faith should sink and falter ;  
Blind hand and blinder eye  
Bind the blind hope upon thy doubt’s old altar  
And stab it till it die.

Think not hast hugged no happiness and never  
Communed with lovely sleep ;  
Had night before thine eyeballs—night forever  
To lead thee to the deep.

Ay ! wouldst thou have thy self-love for a burden,  
A fardle bound with tears,

---

To sweat beneath and gain at last as guerdon  
From hands of wasted years !

Coaxing lewd stars to light thee, feeblér, thinner  
Than phantoms in the moon ;  
Dead stars and all the darkness of the inner  
Self's deader plenilune :

To see at last,—beneath Death's sterner learning,  
—Through sockets sealed with frost,  
The awful sunsets of red heavens burning  
God's baffling pentecost.

## ONCE.

ONCE when the morning on the curling breakers,  
Along the foaming sand,  
Flashed expectation, by the ocean's acres  
Love took command.

And so we sailed, Æolian music melting  
Around our silken sails ;  
The bubbled foam our prow of sandal pelting  
With rainbow gales.

We watched the beach, with sprawling cactus hateful  
And gnarled palmetto, pass  
Beyond our vision where Life once walked fateful  
With Time's slow glass.

And yet, and yet, who might forget the beauty  
Of dim and fragile shells,  
That strewn sad shores of Patience and of Duty  
Like asphodels !

Harsh rocks of Care where Faith's meek flow'r  
suffices  
To lead Love up and on,



---

To levels, that the Bible's lily spices,  
Divine with dawn !

Still, still we went, Love laughing at to-morrow,  
Past sunny isle and cape ;  
Three were we now :—my Soul and Love and—  
Sorrow,  
A tall, grave shape.

And still we went, Love at the golden rudder,  
Till all the day lay late,  
When, lo ! beside him, like an icy shudder,  
Stood pallid Hate.

And still we went, Love seeing me no other :  
None crowned with bleeding thorn,  
None armed with violence, and now another—  
Unyielding Scorn.

Beholding then, Love, who had once commanded  
Alone, now summoned Pride ;  
The darker three, against the bright two banded,  
Stood side by side.

On through the night our boat went drifting, drift-  
ing ;  
My stricken soul alone,  
A white face cold as moonlit marble lifting  
To moan and moan.

## RESIGNATION.

[F Grief must fill my heart with tears, and Time  
    Abate no hour  
Of tyranny with any laughing rhyme,—  
    Be Grief my dower.

If days must sing to my attentive soul  
    Joy's cradle-song,  
Nor lift one grave note in the lovely whole,  
    O Joy, be long.

Bring me pale flowers of the handselled hills,  
    To braid and lay  
On coffined brows, sad separation fills  
    With death's dismay.

Dreams, dreams to drug my soul's life-cup with pure  
    Ideal love ;  
Glad lips and eyes whose beauties still allure  
    The world above.

A harp to hold between lax knees and smite  
    With prayers and tears  
For night bereaved by day, and day by night,  
    Through bitter years.

---

A lute to hug unto the heart, and make  
Youth's tripping tune  
Of Maytime's lily that but fades to wake  
The rose of June.

Up bars of stars, the golden notes of skies,  
On night's black page  
Let the moon's music of pale pathos rise  
To teach young age.

Upon the mountains of the morning lands,  
An unsealed book  
Let Love's nude childhood lift in happy hands  
And old age look.

Apportion, O my God, the hope or fear,  
The grief or glee !  
Thine be the purpose of each smile, each tear  
Eternally.

## AFTER RAIN.

TO see the blossom-bosomed Day again,  
With all the star-white Hours in her train,  
Laugh out of pearl-lights in the golden ray,  
That, leaning on the woodland wildness, blends  
A sprinkled amber with the showers that lay  
Their oblong emeralds on the leafy ends !  
To see her bend with maiden-braided brows  
Above the wildflower sidewise with its strain  
Of dewy happiness, to kiss again  
Each drop to death ! Or, under rainy boughs,  
With fingers fragrant as the woodland rain,  
Gather the sparkles from the sycamore,  
To set within each core  
Of crimson roses girdling her hips  
Where each bud dreams and drips !

Smoothing her blue-black hair,—where many a tusk  
Of iris flashes fairy falchions, sheen  
Around blue banners of the Fairy Queen,—  
Is it a Naiad singing in the dusk,  
That haunts the spring, where all the moss is musk  
With footsteps of the flowers on the banks ?  
Or but a wild-bird voluble with thanks ?

Balm for each blade of grass : the hours prepare  
A festival each weed 's invited to :  
Each bee is drunken with the honied air :  
And all the heaven is eloquent with blue :  
The wet hay glitters, and the harvester  
Tinkles his scythe,—as twinkling as the dew—  
That shall not spare  
Blossom or brier in its sweeping path ;  
And, ere it cut one swath,  
Rings them they die and tells them to prepare.

What is the spice that haunts each glen and glade ?  
A Dryad's lips, who slumbers in the shade ?  
A Faun, who lets the heavy ivy-wreath  
Slip to his thigh as, reaching up, he pulls  
The chestnut-blossoms in whole bosomfuls ?  
A sylvan Spirit, whose sweet mouth will breathe  
Her viewless presence near us, while we wade  
The brook, whose wisdom knows no other song  
Than that the bird sings where it builds beneath  
The wild-rose and sits singing all day long ?

Oh, let me sit with silence for a space !  
A little while forgetting that fierce part  
Of man that struggles in the toiling mart :  
Where God can look into my heart's own heart  
From unsoiled heights made amiable with grace :  
And where the sermons that the old oaks keep

Can steal into me.—And what better then  
Than turning to the moss a quiet face  
To fall asleep ? a little while to sleep  
And dream of wiser worlds and wiser men.

1886.

## PEACE.

## I.

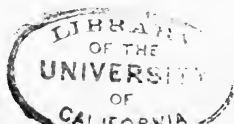
WHEN rose-leaves 'neath the rose-bush lie,  
And lilies bloom and lilacs die,  
When days fall sadder than a sigh,  
Lay me asleep  
Where breezes blow the rose-leaves by,  
Lay me asleep.

## II.

When to the dusty, dreary day  
The lonely clouds bring cooling gray,  
And languidly the tree-tops sway  
And flowers there,  
The silence and the shade will pray,  
And flowers there.

## III.

And shouldst thou stop, O shed no tear  
To flaw the pallid peace that 's here !  
The woodland whisper far and near  
That 's weary grown ;  
Nor bring the world to jar the ear  
That 's weary grown.









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